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Thesis

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION OF JOHN M. E. McTAGGART

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CHAPTER ONE.

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the problem and sources.

The subject of this study is the philosophy of religion of John M. E. McTaggart. The works of the author most relevant to our study are Some Dogmas of Religion, Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology, and Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic. The other sources listed in the bibliography, whether by the same author or by others, are of secondary importance.[1] In Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic McTaggart presents and defends his logical method and general philosophical conclusions. In Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology he applies his speculative method and conclusions to particular problems, most of which are of fundamental religious importance. In Some Dogmas of Religion he presents the religious implications of his philosophy.

B. Definition of religion.

McTaggart defines religion as "an emotion resting on a conviction of a harmony between ourselves and the universe at large."[2]

1. Descriptive or normative?

A definition of religion may be either descriptive or normative.[3] If descriptive it must be broad enough to include all historical religions and religious attitudes. If normative it must be precise enough to express the truth of religion. In other words, it may either describe religions as they have been or are, or it may define religion as it should be.

a. As descriptive McTaggart's definition does justice to historical religions.

McTaggart intends his definition to be descriptive. He aims to do justice to histroical religions. He points out that even Buddhism, in promising an escape into Nirvana, and primitive magic, in asserting that certain natural forces can be bent more or less to man's will, imply a measure of harmony between the universe and man.[4] Even such diverse doctrines as these are described by the definition. At the same time the definition would accept as religious the conclusions of such thinkers as Plato, Spinoza and Hegel.[5] Thus the definition proves to be historically inclusive. It avoids the mistake of identifying religion with particular doctrines widely regarded at any special time and place as fundamental to religion. Belief in a personal God or in personal immortality, though held by many in our own day and civilization to be essentials of religion, could not be so regarded from a descriptive point of view. McTaggart correctly believes that he has avoided such an error and has offered a definition that does justice to the elements common to all religions.

b. McTaggart gives it a normative character in the qualification that the universe must be conceived as good.

As soon as McTaggart begins to elaborate his definition he gives it a normative character. If religion be defined as "an emotion resting on a conviction of a harmony between ourselves and the universe at large," the question at once arises, How much harmony is necessary? McTaggart's answer is that the universe as a whole must be judged to be good. This is the only view that <u>now</u>, in contrast to primitive times, can result in a religious attitude.[6] For this reason McTaggart refuses to call religious any attitude of defiance, however worthy and dignified, toward a universe conceived as evil.[7]

This is an important step toward a normative definition. In Some Dogmas of Religion he goes on to elaborate his normative definition.[8] He attempts to define the nature of religious emotion and its objects and he indicates the grounds for his conviction that the universe, conceived as good, is in harmony with the individual. Though he does not offer a normative definition in a single statement, he leaves no doubt as to his conception of what religion ought to be.

2. His definition distinguishes religion from morality.

McTaggart's definition has the merit of distinguishing religion from morality. He will not concede that "pure religion and undefiled" consists merely in the observance of certain moral duties.[9] If we identify morality and religion McTaggart insists that we are guilty of applying two words to one thing and of leaving the other thing nameless.[10] This is needless confusion. Matthew Arnold's definition of religion is open to such an objection. Religion is more than "morality touched by emotion." Enthusiasm for an ideal, however worthy, is not religion. There must also be the emotion arising from the conviction that the universe responds to, or is in harmony with our ideal.[11]

C. Religion's need of philosophy.

1. Relation of religion and philosophy; definition of philosophy.

Now a belief in the existence of such a harmony is an assertion about the ultimate nature of the universe. It is a philosophic theory. Religion involves an appeal to philosophy which alone can justify its existence. For philosophy (or metaphysics) is but "the systematic study of the ultimate nature of reality."[12]

2. McTaggart's use of the term "dogma."

McTaggart defines dogma as "any proposition which has a metaphysical significance."[13] He refuses to concede this term to those who have abused it. "Dogma" often serves as a term of reproach to cover doctrines regarded as false. Or it is applied to highly complicated theories that only the sophisticated can understand.[14] There is also a "tendency to confine the use of the word to such propositions as are asserted without proof - a tendency probably due to the fact that the adjective dogmatic has this meaning."[15] But such popular misconceptions should not prevent the proper use of the word. For "since no proposition without metaphysical significance is called a dogma, and since so many which have that significance are commonly called by that name, it seems . . . . desirable to give the name to all propositions with metaphysical significance."[16]

3. Dogma essential to religion.

We have seen that religion involves metaphysical assumptions and that all such beliefs may properly be called dogmas. It follows that dogma is essential to religion.[17] Not all dogmas are religious, however. The belief in the existence of matter may or may not influence a person's religious position. McTaggart defines as religious "those metaphysical propositions whose acceptance or rejection by any person would alter his religious position."[16]

a. The two are not identical.

This does not imply the identity of religion and dogma. "Dogma is not religion, any more than the skeleton is the living body. But we can no more be religious without dogma than our bodies could live without their skeletons."[17]

b. Religion can not be based on science which is abstract and relatively superficial.

The conclusion is that religion must be based upon dogma. That this is inevitably so may be seen by considering the claims of other types of knowledge to serve as the basis of religion.

Some would establish religion on the firm foundation of scientific fact. Such knowledge is held to be certain and plain in contrast to the uncertainty and obscurity of metaphysics.[18]

1) It is true that both science and morality, in contrast to metaphysics, can claim to have made definite progress.

McTaggart's reply is that if general agreement be the test of certainty both science and morality possess an advantage over metaphysics. Science especially, can boast of definite progress and of problem after problem solved, the solutions having become the "common and undoubted property of mankind."[19] The advances made by morality, though not so apparent, are yet undeniable. "The possibility of civilized life proves that the general agreement as to morality must be considerable."[19] In contrast, metaphysics can point to no problems finally settled and to no positions reached and established beyond the line of controversy. Philosophy "advances, no doubt," but it is "not by settling any problem finally. The questions evolve into different forms but the answers are still various."[19]

2) But this does not render them fit to serve as the basis of religion; nor does it prove metaphysics to be abstract and futile.

a) Metaphysics is concrete; science, abstract.

All this McTaggart admits. He grants that "for centuries to come" dogma will involve controversy and uncertainty.[20] But he holds this to be no reason for rejecting dogma as the basis of religion. Neither will he admit it to prove that metaphysics is abstract and useless. On the contrary, meta-

physics is the most concrete of all our interests.[21] Although her conclusions are not yet final and indisputable, her problems are the ones that men most want to have solved.[20] In the world as we know it the things that matter most are the things most involved in uncertainty. If metaphysics can be charged with uncertainty, science can be accused of narrowness. By her very nature science is forced to ignore the problems that most concern us. If her advance is definite and steady it is often because by her "comparative abstraction" she has gained "in ease and simplicity" what she has lost "in absolute truth."[22]

By her inherent limitations Science is not able to deal with the question that is decisive for religion. The subject matter of science is what we commonly refer to as matter, and its mechanical laws. This is the extent of her interest. Whether these laws are ultimate or but the expression of a deeper reality she does not even enquire. And rightly so. Should she claim that her mechanical laws express the ultimate nature of the universe, by the very act she would cease to be science and become metaphysics, and her laws would be metaphysical propositions, i.e. dogmas. But it is the possibility of getting rid of dogma that we are discussing.[23]

b) Even if science usurped the role of metaphysics she could prove nothing concerning the character of the universe. This is the question that religion wants answered.

If this objection were waived, science, assuming the role of metaphysics, could not decide as to the harmony and goodness of the universe. She might demonstrate that matter acts according to law and is put together "mind-wise." But from this fact she could not infer the presence of God as the controlling mind. To be God the controlling mind must be good and science could offer no assurance concerning the moral character of the universal mind. On the basis of empirical observation alone no inference can be

made as to the goodness or badness of the universe, nor in fact as to anything at all concerning the world as a whole.[24]

c. Nor can religion be based on morality.

1) To care for virtue, is to care for its ultimate success.

McTaggart as emphatically rejects morality as a basis for religion.[25] By itself morality can offer man no sense of harmony with his universe. The idea of the good may be binding on me regardless of the nature of the universe. It is possible to believe that virtue is its own reward and that the good man is dependent for his happiness on nothing, not even the universe, outside of himself. But if a man cares for virtue must he not care for its ultimate success? If he mourns not his own suffering is he not yet bound to resent a universe that inflicts suffering on others?

> "A virtue which was so intense that it rendered us indifferent to the sufferings of others might be held to have passed into its opposite."
> . . . . . .
> "Unless we have reason to believe that evil is outweighed by good we have no right to approve the universe. And we can have no reason for believing this which is not a dogma."[26]

2) McTaggart's conception of the function of morality and of science is correct, as is his idea of their relation to religion.

It seems to us that these conclusions of McTaggart are valid. Science abstracts from the value and purposive factors in experience and makes no attempt to interpret human experience as a whole. Consequently the "religion of science" is a religion with no conviction regarding the ultimate meaning of human life. Again, the theory that every man should live the good life, commends itself to us independently of our metaphysical position. But such a theory, accepted as a philosophy or a religion, is both near-sighted and indolent. A man's devotion to the good is to be measured by his

interest in the good's success. And his interest ought to be judged not only by his practical efforts but also by his intellectual curiosity. Morality, like science, can offer no exemption from metaphysical study that the intellect will honor. Thus religion must reject both as substitutes for dogma.

3) Criticism of McTaggart's use of the ethical terms "valid" and "binding."

In these conclusions we concur. It is only in regard to a single statement made in McTaggart's discussion of morality as a substitute for dogma that we would raise a question. In urging this objection we might be open to the charge of hair-splitting and of picking our phrases without regard to context did not our objection relate itself to a fundamental confusion in McTaggart's system. The statement follows:

> "Morality, no doubt, still remains binding on us whether the universe is good or bad. The idea of the good is valid for me. If it is not valid for the universe, so much the worse for the universe."[27]

If McTaggart means to say that the sense of obligation is heeded even by philosophers who deny its metaphysical significance, and that in the event that all men turned materialists they would probably continue to find satisfaction in loyalty to the idea of the good, we agree with him. But in its present form the passage is far more sweeping. It asserts that the good is binding upon me and valid for me regardless of whether it is valid for the universe as a whole. If this be true the term valid can only mean "desired." Now this is not its usual meaning. To be valid means to be objectively real; to exist for all minds that are thinking truly; to be <u>there</u> regardless of my recognition or wishes. Nothing is binding on me because I or others desire and admire it. It is binding or valid for me only as it is objectively real. In this sense the idea of the good is not valid for me and is not binding upon me unless it is also valid for the universe, for by the universe we mean pre-

cisely the objective order which we find, rather than desire or create. Should this objective order prove indifferent to distinctions between good and evil, I might continue to cherish and obey my idea of the good, approve those who did likewise, and derive satisfaction therefrom. In this case the binding power of the good would depend upon my inclination or upon the desires of others given force in social customs, but not upon an objective reality independent of any and all desire.

We urge this distinction because of its importance in a criticism of McTaggart's general philosophical position. Its full importance will appear in chapters three, four and five. It will be seen that McTaggart has consistently ignored this distinction. That such neglect, as opposed to mere carelessness of expression, is responsible for the wording of this passage, would seem a legitimate inference.

4) Thus there is no "pure" Christianity free from dogmatic assumptions.

McTaggart concludes this discussion with a telling criticism of the claim that there is a "pure" Christianity free from all dependence upon dogma.[28] He believes that Jesus and the great mass of Christians ought to be the best authorities on the question of the content of their religion. Perhaps they have been mistaken as to the importance of their beliefs. They could hardly have been confused as to the importance of their beliefs for themselves. It can hardly be doubted that Jesus held "various dogmas to be true and important;"[29] that in this respect the church has followed her master;[30] and that the Sermon on the Mount, "sometimes referred to as the ideal of undogmatic religion, in reality contains dogma in almost every line."[29] Historically Christianity has rested on a dogmatic basis. This is not surprising, for had it not done so it could not have been a religion.[31]

D. Practical importance of dogma and religion.

1. McTaggart reminds us that the practical importance of a subject may be logically irrelevant.

McTaggart reminds us that the practical importance of a question may be logically irrelevant. That a belief may make me either happy or miserable is "no reason whatever for accepting or rejecting it."[32]

2. He regrets the practical consequences of his own conclusion that only metaphysicians now have a right to religion.

The religious conclusions to which his philosophy leads him attest his loyalty to the foregoing principle. He is aware of the serious consequences of his theory; that his conclusions, if widely accepted, will mean suffering and disappointment to the majority of mankind. This he regards to be both unfortunate and inevitable.[33] He points out that in the past men have believed in the harmony and goodness of the universe either as a result of "revelation" or of metaphysical study.[34] The result of McTaggart's philosophy is to discredit revelation. Metaphysical study remains the sole road by which dogma, and thus religion, may be reached.

> Since "most people, as the world stands at present, have not the disposition, the education, and the leisure necessary for the study of metaphysics . . . . we are driven to the conclusion that, whether any religion is true or not, most people have no right to accept any religion as true."[35]

If there were any concensus of expert opinion in matters of dogma, the common man might be justified in accepting a dogma which he had not investigated as readily as he now accepts the theory of gravitation on the testimony of scientific authority. But such unanimity in matters of dogma is not in sight. It would be rash to declare it to be finally impossible. The fact remains that the common man is not now and will not soon be entitled to accept any dogmas on

authority.

3. Reply to this. If, as he says, every word and action implies a system of metaphysics, must not the common man consider himselp an inveterate metaphysician?

To this conclusion we might reply that life inevitable runs ahead of logic. Indeed if it were not so, there would be no experience for the philosopher to interpret. Even the philosopher cannot always wait for his logic. He must live during the process of working out his philosophy, and should his system fail to satisfy even himself it is doubtful whether he ought to isolate himslef from the facts that he cannot explain. McTaggart himself confesses that he is unable to explain the time process.[36] Yet we would be rash to conclude that therefore he ought to eschew all relations with the clock. His retort might be that he has convassed all the possibilities and has reached the hard-won conclusion that there is no way of reconciling the logically demonstrated perfection of the universe and the facts of change and evil. But is his situation so different from that in which the common man finds himself? He need not be a trained philosopher to see that his experience seems to present contradictions. Perhaps he believes in a good God; yet here are the brute facts of suffering and evil. How shall he reconcile the apparent contradiction? If he consults the experts he finds that there is no God; that there is a God; that the universe is fundamentally indifferent; that the universe is fundamentally good. These possibilities would seem to be exhaustive. Which shall he accept? According to McTaggart's theory it would seem that he has no right to make up his mind one way or the other. But McTaggart also says that "every word and every action implies some theory of metaphysics."[37] If this be true must

not the common man conclude that he is an inveterate metaphysician, doomed by nature to come to his own best conclusion as to whether life be good or evil? If so, he can only proceed by accepting the theory that best seems to fit in with the facts of his experience and look to the future to justify his half-instinctive, half-reasoned belief. In other words, he will hope that the future will grant the desired synthesis of contradictions.

That this is often the common man's method, even in reference to scientific truths, would seem to be the case. The mass of men do not believe that the earth is round and accept the law of gravitation merely on the testimony of scientific experts. Rather, they accept the theories of the experts as the truth because they themselves can reach the west by sailing east and have watched the stone hurled into the air yield to the earth's attraction and return to the ground. The point is that the common man may, and often does discover truth by use of the only criterion available to the philosopher, - the ability of a theory to explain the facts of experience. The common man's range of experience may be limited. He may ignore or be blind to many of the contradictions contained therein. Often he may forsake reason to rely on instinct or feeling or custom. In doing so he goes wrong, as does the philosopher who has access to the same expedient. While the common man's risk is the greater; while his conclusions may not possess the prima facie value of the philosopher's, he yet is obligated to take the risk and to make up his mind concerning the meaning of human life. In doing so he may well remember that he may have a "nose for facts" that certain philosophers have missed. Indeed, it may be that McTaggart's denial of religion to all but metaphysicians is due to his blindness to the significance of ethical experience. In the common man's tenacious devotion to religion is there not an implicit judgment of profound metaphysical significance,

namely, that life does possess meaning and value, and that there is a realm of value that not only stoops to, but commands, the humblest? Granted that this may be but an instinctive belief on the part of multitudes. Granted that we have no final right to declare it valid before we have examined it to the best of our ability. Granted that such a judgment often is as the grain concealed beneath doctrinal husks. The fact remains that the judgment is as valid and worthy of respect, and, we repeat, of the philosopher's attention, as the common man's instinctive belief in the existence of the physical world. Any philosophy which holds, as does McTaggart's, to the fundamental rationality of the universe, might seem bound to recognize in this tenacious persistence of religion and morality, the impact upon the human mind of the moral and rational order of which man is a part. Any thinker who holds, as McTaggart does not, that the facts of life cannot be explained without reference to a Person of supreme worth and goodness, will not be surprised that God does not restrict the manifestation of himself to metaphysicians.

This is not to make the common man the final court of appeal in philosophy. It is not to advance instinct as a criterion of truth. Nor is it an apotheosis of willful ignorance. It is only to insist that the philosopher interpret the common man's experiences, moral as well as physical. It is only to insist that life does not wait for logic and that the common man, as well as the philosopher, is bound to discover truth as best he can, - by accepting and acting upon the principle that best explains the facts of his own experience.

4. McTaggart emphasizes the importance of dogma and religion.

While McTaggart would restrict the right of religion to those who have earned it through metaphysical study, he does not deny the importance of religion and philosophy.[38] In fact there seems to be a religious and ethical motive at the basis of his system. He believes that those who profess to be interested in goodness or in people ought to be concerned as to the fate of these in the universe.[39] The solution of this problem has great significance for the happiness or misery of mankind. This is the question that people want answered. As their religious views are challenged, they are learning that it cannot be answered by "revelation." Consequently they are bound to turn to metaphysics, which will "become of all studies the most practical."[40] Nor is it strange that metaphysical knowledge should be both rare and difficult of attainment.

> "Is knowledge so easy to get that the highest and deepest of all knowledge is likely to be had for the asking? Or is everything good so common, that we should expect that religion - almost the best of all earthly things - should be never absent where it is desired?"[41]

In these high terms does McTaggart appraise the value of religion.

CHAPTER TWO.

I. IS THERE HARMONY BETWEEN THE HUMAN SELF AND ITS UNIVERSE?

We have discussed McTaggart's theory of the nature of religion, its relation to philosophy, science and morality, and its practical importance. The question now arises, Is the nature of the universe such as to make religion possible? Is there the necessary harmony between the self and its universe?

In discussing McTaggart's final answer to this question we shall consider his conception of the psychological nature of the self,[42] of the relation of the self to physical nature,[43] and of the ethical nature of the self.[44] These studies will furnish the data which McTaggart should interpret in his general philosophical conclusions. We shall consider his general method and conclusions under the headings: "The metaphysical nature of the self"[45] and "Is the harmony of the universe due to a supreme person, or God?"[46]

A. The psychological nature of the self.

1. Characteristics of the self.

McTaggart defines the self as a "unity . . . . that, in the midst of the flux of experience . . . . remains identical with itself."[47] It is implied in all thought.[48] It is capable of recognizing itself.[49] "The self is a complex, but not a compound."[50] It may be analyzed into its constituent parts. But these parts are "of such a nature that they would cease to exist when the self ceased to exist."[51] The self is not a mere series of sensations; nor is it a compound of elements.

> "To regard the self as built up of parts, which could exist after it, and be recombined like the bricks from a house which has been pulled down, is to render it impossible to explain consciousness."[52]

Consciousness must be studied synoptically, as a unique whole.

McTaggart emphasizes the uniqueness and privacy of the self. He holds that no self can ever be a part of another self.[53] Again, he points out that the nature of the self is to will, desire and feel.[54] In harmony with his general theory of ethics, he does not emphasize the purposive character of the self.

2. The self not a Ding an sich.

McTaggart opposes the self of which he speaks to the Ding an sich. of the old soul psychology. He is willing to use the phrase "identity of substance" which is, he admits, "a rather unfashionable mode of expression." But the substance of which he speaks is not an abstraction. It is not an "imaginary Ding an sich."[55]

3. Traces of inconsistency in his psychology.

There are evidences that McTaggart fails to keep in mind the distinction upon which he has insisted.

a. The "pure I" an element.

His reference to self-consciousness or "the pure I" as an element raises a doubt in this connection.[56] For a critic of sensationalism and soul substance this is misleading terminology. The "I" taken by itself, apart from its content, is an abstraction. But to speak of it as an element is to suggest that it is a distinct part of consciousness, rather than the abiding, self-identical relation in which all conscious experience occurs.

However, a man need not be bound by the terminology of his predecessors or his critics, and he should be judged by the general tendency of his thought, rather than by isolated expressions. Judged in this way, McTaggart seems to disprove this particular charge of atomism. If he calls the "pure I" an element, he considers it an indispensable element. He likewise calls the not-self, the content of the self, a mere abstraction. To understand the knowing self he would go to the concrete whole from which these two abstractions have been made. Either abstraction, taken by itself, is meaningless and "can only exist in combination with the other element."[57] With such qualifications he seems to correct the interpretation to which his atomistic terminology lends itself.

b. Concrete self, or abstract, passive soul?

But his mode of expression is even more questionable in other portions of the exposition referred to above. In this and other connections his language raises a serious doubt as to whether he does not often think of the self as a passive, receptive soul substance.

1) In emphasizing the self's dependence upon the not-self, he is in danger of denying its privacy and uniqueness.[58]

In discussing the paradoxical nature of the self McTaggart says:

> "Thus the nature of the self is sufficiently paradoxical. What does it include? Everything of which it is conscious. . . . What can it say is not inside it? Nothing. What can it say is not outside it? A single abstraction. . . . If we try to make it a distinct individual by separating it from all other things, it loses all the content of which it can be conscious, and so loses the very individuality which we started by trying to preserve."[59]

And again:

> "If we exclude whatever is not self, the self shrinks to a point, and vanishes altogether."[60]

It is not clear whether McTaggart intends this as a genetic or logical account of the distinction between the self and not-self. He may mean that at birth, or at its beginning, the self is completely dependent upon the external world for its content. This is obvious. From the first the self is dependent upon a body which is part of the world of nature, in commerce with which the self develops. Experience knows nothing of the "pure I." Self-consciousness always involves sense-experience, i.e., experience for which the self is dependent upon the not-self or outside world.

But it would seem that McTaggart intends to say more than this. He seems to be giving an analysis of the relation of the self and not-self at any particular moment. If so, his statement that the self, in contrast to the not-self, is a mere abstraction, a point that "vanishes altogether" is false. Granted that self experience always involves sensory elements, and that much of the self's experience comes independently of its will, it does not follow that at any moment the whole content of the self is but a reflection of the outside world with which it is then in commerce. To say so is to ignore the fact that the self may "turn a deaf ear" to all impressions coming from without and by an act of will initiate a train of thought and series of images that have no necessary relation to its present connection with the environment. There <u>is</u> a relation to past sensory experience, and even in memory the conscious process is closely associated with a brain process. The point is that nothing in the present external situation can fully explain the present experience of the self. To say that in a logical separation of the self and not-self, the former would shrink to a point and disappear is to misrepresent the facts. And further, since the self is a willing, idealizing agent, there may be many features of its present experience that are independent of the present external environment.

Nor is McTaggart always so conservative as in the passage quoted above. He goes so far as to say that if knowledge and volition were perfect, so that the self "knew and acquiesced in the whole of reality," there would be nothing contained in the self "in such a way as not to be also outside it."[61] Judging from this statement alone, it would seem that this state of affairs which is to exist in ultimate reality, would involve the disappearance of selfhood. McTaggart would disown this theory as he desires to make individuality a basic principle of his system. The alternative explanation appears to be that, regardless of his protestations to the contrary, he tends to regard the self as a soul substance which is passively influenced by the external world and in knowledge merely reflects its environment. Thus when all selves reflected the same environment they would be identical. His explicit statement that the self is active in knowledge does not explain away the other tendency in his thought.[62]

Our conviction is that he is bent upon fitting the facts of psychological experience to his theory of a universal harmony of timelessly existing selves.[63] His task, which we regard as impossible, is to demonstrate how individuals can thus exist in a real unity and harmony. His answer is that the nature of the individuals is to express their complete individuality in their mutual relations. The psychological implication of this theory is that the self must be in complete harmony with the not-self (i.e., other selves) and possess no individuality which may not be exhausted in its relations with the not-self. We have attempted to prove this empirically false. To hold it is to reduce the concrete, purposive, private individual to a logical abstraction.

2) Passive soul or active self in ethical theory?

The same influence may be partially responsible for his ethical determinism.[64] It is conceivable that a self-psychologist should also be an ethical determinist, although it would seem that the purposive character of conscious experience and its final reality (as opposed to mere appearance) would be evident to a psychologist who recognizes that the self is to be studied as a whole. McTaggart denies the self the power of choice and holds that on any other theory it is necessary to believe that a man's choices have no relation at all to his character.[65] According to him the indeterminist has no right to speak of the probability that a man will act one way or the other.

An answer is that the self is an active, purposive agent, whose acts do help to determine its character. While a self's character may suggest a choice as probable, it does not make the choice necessary. A motive is not merely a force striking us from without. It may have been aroused or encouraged by forces playing upon us. Many influences from the external world have entered into its being. But it is no single one, nor compound of, those influences. It is the self's own creation. Upon it is the mark of the self's uniqueness. It can be explained only as a whole and not by being separated into its elements. As the self is truly individual, so are its motives. They express its nature but its nature is not exhausted in its relations with the not-self. This, we imagine, is the stumbling block to McTaggart. He would have his self in harmony with, i.e., completely determined by, the not-self.[66] Consequently he speaks as if desires impinged upon the self whose only possibility of action lay in the choice of one of the desires presented by the environment.[67] This is to de-

grade the self to a more or less passive soul substance. A self that can only choose between desires that strike it from without is a logical abstraction. It may meet McTaggart's demand for a soul acquiescent in the universal harmony of Absolute Reality.[68] It does not meet the demand of ethics and psychology in their study of the self present in all experience.

3) Soul, not self, in theory of immortality.

McTaggart's theory of immortality and preëxistence involves the same fallacy.[69] He believes that the eternity of the self consists in a series of existences, "perhaps an infinite number" with no continuity of memory.[70] He is aware of the difficulty of this view, - that his theory is open to the charge that loss of memory means loss of selfhood.[71] But he believes that "in spite of the loss of memory, it is the same person who lives in the successive lives."[72] In a later section of our paper we shall discuss our objection to this view in detail.[73] At this place we shall be content to quote the timely criticism of Tsanoff:

> "The identity is an identity of substance; the preëxistence and immortality are the preëxistence and immortality of a continuous self-identical entity. The hand is the hand of Hegel but the voice is the voice of rational psychology and the scholastic simple substance." [74]

Although many passages explicitly repudiate the view, it is evident that McTaggart tends to reduce the self of concrete experience to a logical abstraction. We have observed this tendency in his psychology, his ethics and his theory of immortality.

B. The self and physical nature.

1. Importance of this subject for our general problem.

Our aim is to discover whether McTaggart finds the self to be in harmony with its universe. Thus far we have been discussing his psychological interpretation of the self. This at once raises the mind-body problem which is involved in the larger problem of the self's relation to physical nature. If the self should prove to be but an activity of the body or a product of physical nature, our search for the harmony essential to religion would be at an end.

2. Physical nature is but a deduction from the sensory experiences of the self.

a) Matter can be understood only in terms of spirit.

McTaggart understands the influences responsible for the view that "the self is a mere activity of the body."[75] The self exists only in intimate connection with a physical body. As far as our experience goes, sensation, and thus knowledge, would be impossible without the body. When the body is injured, the mind may be deranged. When the body dies, the mind ceases its functions.[76] This body is a part of the world of matter that seems to exist and influence us independently of our will. The world of matter is a vast system whose permanence stands in imposing contrast to the brief life of spirit.[77] The fact that a cause need not resemble its effect suggests that matter may be the cause of such a unique substance as spirit.[78]

Such a conclusion would depend on the proposition that matter can exist independently of spirit. This McTaggart denies.[79] As soon as we begin to describe matter we discover that we can only talk about our sensations. These are ultimate facts of experience. However ultimate, they

need interpretation.[80] Common sense usually explains them by inferring the existence of a substratum called "matter" as their cause. This is but an inference. Of such a substratum we have no experience whatever.[81] In fact the conception involves us in contradictions. If we infer that either primary or secondary qualities of matter are true of an independent external reality we find ourselves in hopeless difficulties. These prove to be relative to the percipient. Of an independent material substratum we have no knowledge at all. Is it like our sensations? Then it can be known and must be a sensation instead of their inferred cause. If it is unlike our sensations, how could it be their cause? Even if we should waive this objection what right have we to talk about anything so removed from our experience?[82] Further, if this matter be unlike its effects, why call it matter at all?[83] It is as legitimate to conclude that it is of the nature of spirit. Since our only experience of it is in terms of conscious experience it becomes logically necessary so to conceive it. The conclusion is that we "can only explain matter in terms of a conscious self, and to talk of matter existing without consciousness is absurd."[84]

b. The world of science relatively superficial.

1) The Understanding presupposes Reason.

The "fact that physical science treats matter as independent of spirit, and that physical science forms a vast system, coherent, accepted, and, from its own standpoint, irrefutable"[85] is not for McTaggart a final objection to this argument. The point of view of science is relative superficial.[86] It is valid in the sense that any abstraction is valid. It is false if taken as the complete truth. The categories used in the Understan-

ding are abstract. They are valid as expressing inadequate and imperfect points of view and for the Understanding itself they are independent and ultimate.[87] The Understanding does not know "that the lower categories are abstractions from the higher."[88] In contrast to the Reason it accepts the lower categories as stable and independent and does not see that they inevitably lead to the higher categories. Reason, which sees things synoptically, demands an ultimate explanation. It is not satisfied with the abstractions of science. It sees that "the earlier categories, unless synthesised by the later ones, plunge us in contradictions."[89] Thus Reason, or philosophy, the most concrete of all approaches to reality, presses on beyond science, answers the questions which science has raised and cannot answer,[90] introduces "fresh categories," "not merely as additions, but as altering materially the meaning of the categories of science,"[91] and seeks an ultimate explanation of the universe. The fact that science assumes the independent reality of the physical world is not inconsistent with an idealistic view of the universe. The point of view of science is but provisional.

2) Comment and criticism.
Science provisional in two ways:

a) Incomplete; by itself unable to reach conception of physical world as a whole.

This we accept as valid. The point of view of science is provisional in two ways. It is incomplete. Science seeks to bring the whole of physical nature under its laws. It would analyze the physical world as a whole. But this process is never complete. The world as a whole is not a matter of experience.

Furthermore, if the standpoint of science be taken as final the very conception of the world as a whole is contradictory. It involves the questions as to whether time and space are finite or infinite, in attempting to answer which we are driven to deny the independent reality of the physical world. That is, the inadequacy of the physical categories becomes evident and we are led to the higher, to conceive the physical universe in terms of spirit. Thus McTaggart says that the Understanding postulates an ideal that it cannot by itself reach, and that in order to save itself from the contradictions in which it becomes involved it must postulate the validity of Reason. Thus

> "to assert the validity of the lower categories without the higher would be to assert a contradiction, and to do this is to destroy all possibility of coherent thought."[92]

b) Science is also abstract in disregarding all facts of value and purpose.

There is another sense in which science is abstract and provisional. Its method compels it to make a preliminary abstraction from the value and purposive aspects of experience. The business of Reason is to relate these aspects of experience to the world of science and to interpret the whole in its concrete fullness. Thus the Understanding goes about its work assuming that Reason will come to its aid in two ways: By solving the contradictions in which the Understanding finds itself, in an interpretation of the physical world as a whole; and by recognizing and interpreting the aspects of experience that science intentionally ignores, and by relating them to the world of science and its findings in a comprehensive theory of reality. Reason is bound to perform both of these tasks. It matters not with which one it begins. Perfect Reason would be driven from the one to the other. But human

reason is less trustworthy. Becoming preoccupied with one of the tasks it may forget that the other remains to be done. We believe that McTaggart is guilty of this error of omission. He seems to be content to have Reason do the first and neglect the second of its tasks. He thinks of philosophy as furnishing the higher categories to resolve the contradictions of the Understanding and account for the logical harmony found in the world of nature. He fails to demand that philosophy recover the facts ignored by science in its preliminary abstraction and relate them to the conception of the physical world as a whole.[93]

c. This is not solipsism; the common world remains.

In proving that the physical world does not exist in its own right McTaggart does not fall into the errors of agnosticism and solipsism. He does not deny the objectivity of the world of nature, its laws and regularities. Neither does he deny that we can know anything about it. His contention is that the objective order is real and can be known to be of the nature of mind.[94]

d, The self and its body.

In proving this McTaggart disposes of the theory that the self is but one of the activities of its body.[95] Body belongs to the physical order which he has demonstrated to be of the nature of spirit. The aim of the attempt to account for the self as an activity of its body was to reduce the entire universe to physical terms. Such a procedure has been reversed, and matter now appears to be of the nature of conscious experience.

e. Failure to account for the common world.

If matter is to be explained in terms of consciousness, the question arises, Of whose consciousness is the world of nature an expression? Any answer must account for the regularity and order of nature, that is, for the common world in which finite selves participate but do not create. As McTaggart's view of ultimate reality is that of a system of finite selves,[96] we may anticipate that he will have difficulty in accounting for the physical, logical and moral orders which these selves discover and by which they are united into a system.[97]

CHAPTER THREE.

C. The ethical nature of the self.

McTaggart has found that the physical world must be conceived in terms of spirit. He has established a certain amount of harmony between the self and its universe. In substance they are the same. But are they the same in character? To answer this question an investigation of the ethical nature of the self is necessary. It is conceivable that a non-material universe might be indifferent to the ideals of human life. Before McTaggart can assert that the harmony is a harmony of a good universe with the good in man, he must investigate the nature of the ideals of human life and their relation to the universe as a whole.[98]

1. The nature of the self is to have ideals.

According to McTaggart it is the nature of the self to have ideals.[99] But what is an ideal? How shall we define the good? McTaggart attempts no definite answer to these questions. To discover his conceptions we must study and compare his various references to the good and his treatment of more general ethical questions.[100]

McTaggart speaks of the ideals that are fundamental to our nature.[101] When we press him to indicate why certain ideals are fundamental he replies that they alone can satisfy us;[102] they alone can bring us into harmony with a rational universe. Even though this does not answer the question asked, it does state an important truth. An ideal implies a reference to reality beyond myself; it is not what I chose when guided only by impulse, desire, feeling or instinct. But there is serious doubt whether McTaggart

would sanction this inference. For him the terms "ideal," and "desire" seem to be synonomous. Is immortality good? he asks, and answers the question by saying that some people do not desire it.[103] At one time he seems to identify the valuable with what interests us,[104] and states that our desires must rule in the kingdom of the good.[105] At another time he clearly implies that our desires may or may not be of a moral nature.[106] Yet he interprets the aim of morality as that of finding "the fundamentally desirable."[107] He refers to the highest values as pleasures and in the same sentence speaks of the pleasure of gratified desire.[108] To the same effect is the assertion that "pleasure is no more to be treated lightly than virtue,"[105] and that "any state of consciousness is valuable only in respect of the element of feeling in it."[108]

Doubtless a thinker has a right to create his own terminology and is to be pardoned if he uses words in other than their accepted meaning. He can hardly be pardoned if his use of them is inconsistent. To attempt to discover McTaggart's definition of the good is to encounter consistent confusion. This is inexcusable. There are some distinctions that every writer of ethical theory is obligated to make. One of them is the relation of the terms "desirable," "pleasurable" and "good." If ethical experience is clear in regard to any one fact it is that these words often cannot be used interchangeably. To use them so is to confess that one has neglected to make a very elementary ethical distinction. McTaggart believes that we should "come to a clear idea as to what the fundamental demands and aspiration of our natures are."[109] If he himself has done so, his ethical writings do him grave injustice. He has made no serious attempt to tell us what side of our nature is fundamental; which demands ought to be satisfied and which ought to be denied; what is the distinctive characteristic of an ideal; and

why we have any reason to believe that our ideals are valid of a reality beyond ourselves. On most of these fundamental matters McTaggart is both vague and inconsistent.

2. Is the self free to choose between ideals?

McTaggart mentions four possible senses in which a man may be said to be free. "In the first place, we may say that a man is free to do anything which nothing but his own nature prevents him from doing."[110] This is freedom of self-determination. In the second sense of the term "a man is free to do anything which nothing but his own will prevents him from doing."[111] This is freedom of self-direction. "In the third place a man is said to act freely when he acts according to the ultimate ideal of his nature."[111] This McTaggart calls freedom of self-realization. It is evident that in all these meanings of the term, a man may be completely determined by his nature and environment and yet be called free. In the last sense "a man is free in any action, if his choice of that action is not completely determined." This freedom is referred to as free will, but is called by McTaggart freedom of indetermination.[112] The question is, Is man free in this sense? Or to substitute a different terminology, Are man's choices real choices or are they the necessary results of forces of heredity and environment over which he has no control?

a) McTaggart concedes too much to the provisional point of view of science, which is deterministic.

In his ethical theory McTaggart forgets that philosophy is not bound to accept the provisional point of view of science as an ultimate and consistent interpretation.[113] He does "not propose to consider whether

Causality and the Uniformity of Nature are valid of events other than volitions." He will only point out that "the indeterminist does not, as a rule, deny that all events except volitions must be completely determined. . ."[114] But this is precisely what the indeterminist does deny and what McTaggart is obligated to deny by the distinction which he has made between Understanding and Reason, science and philosophy. The scientist is entitled to the deterministic hypothesis as a methodological device and does right to ignore the facts of spiritual causality which invalidate his principle as a philosophical interpretation. But this privilege cannot be extended to McTaggart, the philosopher. Since his point of view is to be final he has no right to an hypothesis that is purely ideal and abstract, and thus that does violence to important facts. McTaggart cannot beg this question by speaking in the authoritative tone of the scientist.[114a]

b. Rightly rejects mere feeling as proof of either.

McTaggart rightly asserts that no appeal to "immediate conviction" can settle this question. The debate must be decided on the basis of rational argument.[115]

He also rejects the argument based on the sense of freedom that one experiences in action. This, he says, means only absence of restraint. A man experiences this sense of freedom when in acting he wills to do so. This is compatible with the fact that his will may be completely determined.[116]

c. Confuses social effects with the rational, subjective ground of actions.

In his argument McTaggart seems to evade the real difficulties of determinism by shifting from the subjective ground of the moral life to its

social effects. Now any action may be judged both from an inside and an outside point of view. In one case the term "good" may have a very different meaning from its use in the other. Judged by its social effects the instinctive love of a mother dog for her puppies may be called good. It may furnish an example of devotion to which the attention of young children may well be drawn. But the dog's attitude could hardly be called morally good. By using the term "good" in the former sense McTaggart seeks to prove that determinism is compatible with all our moral judgments. He insists that the effects of an action are good whether the agent is determined or free. "Would my own possession of knowledge, or the satisfaction of my own hunger, or the relief of the distress of others, cease to be good because" in bringing them about my will was completely determined? he asks.[117] The answer is that from the standpoint of their social effects these actions might be judged good, but if completely determined, from the point of view of the agent himself, these actions could not be called good in the full sense of that term. If determinism be true, the agent must regard all his choices as necessary results of forces which he is powerless to influence. What matter that he is able to say, "Whether my will is completely determined or not, it is clear that I shall not learn classical Greek or satisfy my hunger unless I will to do so. . ."[117] The additional fact is to be considered, that whichever choice I make, in making it I am not reasonable, good or bad; I am only doing that which I cannot avoid doing. McTaggart consistently ignores this fact. To demonstrate that excellence is not dependent upon the free will of the possessor, McTaggart reminds us that:

> "We regard the intellectual excellence of Shakespeare with more approval than the excellence shown by the most brilliant punster . . . . because we regard excellence in his direction as more important, in the general scale of values, than excellence in punning."[118]

He points out that "Shakespeare's genius, on the one hand, and the absence of equal genius in" others are "facts completely determined." This is true, judged again from an external point of view. But it is also true that either Shakespeare or a punster must be judged by the attitude that he assumes toward his genius. If he accepts it as a moral responsibility and opportunity; develops, instead of wastes it; and if in doing so his choice is a real choice, both he and his genius are good in a sense of the word that cannot be applied to any action or any excellence that is completely determined.

McTaggart often seems on the point of recognizing this, - that the moral life consists in a free choice of the good, in a willing obedience to my sense of obligation to choose the best. He goes so far as to admit that the arugment from the judgment of obligation is the strongest argument for free will, although he "cannot regard it as satisfactory,"[119] and that

> "a man does feel a responsibility to himself for defects of volition . . . . which he does not feel in case of a defect with which volition has nothing to do."[120]

He appears ready to grapple with the problem of how a man can be expected to feel responsible for actions over which he has no control. But as soon as he faces the issue he shifts to an external point of view.

d. Superficial view of moral obligation.

1) External: to others, to God (?), and to self.

McTaggart mentions "three sorts of responsibility [that] have been asserted - to our fellow men, to God, and to self."[121] One right expect that these would be discussed in the reverse order. The sense of responsibility is personal. It is always self-imposed. My sense of

responsibility to others or to God is not imposed from without, else it would not be a moral responsibility. Its basis is my readiness to live a responsible life. It depends upon whether I do hold myself responsible for my motives and actions. However, McTaggart discusses these types of responsibility in the order suggested.

He makes the surprising statement that my responsibility to my fellow men consists "in the fact that it is reasonable for them to reward and punish me for my volitions, and in that fact only."[122] And again:

> "A man is not called responsible to his fellow men because they do right to judge him evil, but because they do right to punish him. . . ."[123]

We refer to these statements as surprising because McTaggart leaves us in the dark as to <u>why</u> men do right to reward and punish me as the case may be. Who gave them this right? What if they abuse it? Are the wishes of others always morally binding on me? What if my moral judgment is opposed to their standards of conduct? Am I to regard myself as morally responsible to others whose judgments my moral sense repudiates, just because they have the right to reward and punish me? All these questions McTaggart ignores.[124]

His discussion of our responsibility to God moves on the same level.[125] If God be omnipotent he cannot be good and we are not responsible to him on any theory. If he is not omnipotent, the determinist, as well as the indeterminist, may feel responsible to him because of his power to devise a system of punishments to check man's sin. Evidently in his relations to God man is to be guided only by pleasure-pain motives. No higher motive is suggested. As McTaggart denies the existence of God, the superficiality of this part of his discussion need not be taken seriously.

We turn to his treatment of responsibility to one's self in the

hope that he will attempt to meet fundamental problems.[126] But we are disappointed. He tells us that just as I feel responsibility to others because they do right to reward and punish me, so do I feel responsible to myself for defects of volition, because "I recognize that I do well to feel shame and remorse."[127] But what is the basis of this recognition? Why is it well to feel shame and remorse rather than pride and satisfaction in reference to my defects of volition? McTaggart answers "that in the one case it may improve matters and in the other case it cannot."[127] And what does improvement mean? Why is it to be chosen? Does it mean that I shall ever improve to the extent of acting from higher motives than a desire for pleasure and a fear of pain? When such questions as these are left open it hardly seems that McTaggart has made a serious attempt to deal with his problem.

2) He fails to examine the fundamental nature of moral obligation.

The foregoing criticism, based on McTaggart's discussion of free will, applies to his definitely formulated theories. However in his ethics McTaggart is happily inconsistent, and in discussing related problems he often corrects the hasty conclusions criticized above. Our present concern is with his admissions as to the importance of the sense of obligation for ethical theory.

a) He concedes that the basis of all morality is the personal sense of obligation.

In his discussion of punishment McTaggart supplements, if he does not contradict, his theory that I am responsible to my fellowmen because they do right to reward and punish me. He distinguishes between punishment that deters through fear and punishment that reenforces the real moral motive,

encourages a feeling of disgrace, and induces repentance. He says:

> "But a punishment cannot lead to repentance unless it is recognized as the fitting consequence of a moral fault. . . ."[128]

And again:

> "punishment can only purify by appealing to the moral nature of the culprit."[129]

And again:

> "without the approval of the individual conscience no system of morality can now be satisfactory."[130]

In these statements McTaggart has forsaken the external point of view to stand on the real ground of the moral life. The emphasis is not upon the opinions of others or their ability to reward or punish me. It is laid upon the attitude of the agent himself. If these statements are true, my responsibility to my fellowmen and myself does not consist in the one case in the fact that they do right to reward and punish me and in the other that I do well to feel shame and remorse. To say so is to confuse the consequences of a judgment of value with the judgment itself. My responsibility to my fellowmen and to myself springs from my recognition of myself and my fellows as members in a moral order whose values we are obligated to realize. I may fulfill or disregard my responsibility to others in many ways known only to myself. A mother's spontaneous sacrifices for her child are hardly inspired by the thought of the praise to which these entitle her. Her ideal of motherhood is quite above such considerations. Again, my hatred for a rival, concealed for politic reasons, is beyond the reach of social rewards and punishments. Even if my fellowmen were aware of my attitude they would not do well to combat my motive with the clumsy measures at their command. To do so would be to attempt to remove a particle of dust from the eye with a pair of tongs. There are virtues and sins of great social significance

that are too delicate to be grasped with the awkward instruments with which society must work. The mother's devotion and my hatred for an enemy involve respectively, an acceptance and a rejection, of social (and thus personal) responsibility, without even raising the question as to the praise or blame, reward or punishment which they might merit from others. They spring from the nature of the individual's personal, yet social, ideal. They refer back to the fact that he either has, or has not, imposed upon himself the moral obligation which every loyal citizen of the kingdom of value must assume.

It is this fact which McTaggart seems to recognize in the passages quoted above. It is this fact that he seems to have in mind when he admits that morality is not "altogether a social matter;"[131] that it is possible to be in fundamental opposition to your society and yet be in the right.[132] It is this truth of which he seems to be thinking when he criticizes Hegel for disregarding the significance of conscience. In this connection he says:

> "The subjective conviction is by no means the whole of morality, but it is an essential part."[131]

Such insights as these would seem to necessitate a revision of his treatment of moral obligation in his discussion of free will. But this is too much to expect. McTaggart has not attempted to give any searching and consistent treatment of moral obligation and its function as the organizing principle of the moral life. Nor does he seem to recognize its metaphysical significance.

b) He fails to see that determinism throws the moral life into contradiction.

McTaggart cannot "see the least ground for the conclusion that the belief in determinism makes choice unreasonable."[133] The determinist,

as well as the indeterminist, believes that his choice will have some influence on the result. What matter then if his choice itself be inevitable? The belief that my choice to shut the door is completely determined will not make it unreasonable for me to choose to shut the door.[133] As long as I know that my will can affect the result my determinism will not make choice and judgments of obligation absurd or render "it absurd to be moved by a regard for duty."[134]

We might reply to McTaggart that on deterministic principles, although I want the door shut, it is entirely reasonable for me to sit lazily in my chair and explain my indolence on the ground that my action is completely determined. The fact that I do choose to shut the door after considering this alternative indicates that I take my determinism with a grain of salt. It is McTaggart's superficial and external view of obligation that conceals from him the contradiction into which determinism would throw the moral life.

The categorical imperative tells me that I am obligated to act reasonably and to live the best possible life. Determinism informs me that whether or not I try to act reasonably or to realize my best, I <u>am doing</u> my best. My effort or my lack of effort is an inevitable result of conditions beyond my influence. It is evident that this involves the moral life in a contradiction. It is not a purely practical matter, as McTaggart seems to imply.[135] It is a question of facing a contradiction with which the dialectic is supposed to make us dissatisfied. When McTaggart urges us to remember that determinism does not render choice absurd, he is telling but half the truth. The opposite is also true, - neither does determinism render the lack of choice absurd.

e. He caricatures indeterminism; interprets it as belief in sheer caprice.

McTaggart caricatures indeterminism by interpreting it as belief in caprice. He charges that the indeterminist has forsaken all right to speak of a probability that a person will prefer the good to the evil,[136] or to hold a person responsible for his past. For does not the believer in free will teach that a man's choices have no relation whatever to his character?[137]

If this be an accurate statement of the indeterminist's position it is not strange that McTaggart has embraced its opposite. In a previous section we criticized McTaggart for speaking as if motives impinged upon the self from without, instead of being the self's own unique creation.[138] This very fact makes a choice the expression of character. For into that choice the self has placed something that it could have withheld. The choice was deliberate, and because deliberate an expression of the self's unique character. The indeterminist might insist that only on this theory does the act of judging a character have any meaning. He would also insist that on this theory it is reasonable to predict the nature of the future choices of a man. But such a prediction is limited to possibilities only. A necessary choice is a contradiction in terms. Moral choices are real choices and not gratuitous approvals of decisions that the self is compelled to make.

3. The supreme good and the moral criterion.

We are considering McTaggart's view of the ethical nature of the self. We have seen that he regards the self as by nature guided by ideals. But what is the principle by which the self ought to select his ideals? By

what rule shall the self make its choices? What ideals are of supreme, rather than of instrumental value? These questions introduce us to the problem of the supreme good and the moral criterion.

a. The supreme good identical with the supreme reality.

McTaggart reminds us that the supreme reality as such need not be the supreme good.[139] It must be demonstrated to be so. He believes himself to have made the demonstration. His dialectic has arrived at the Absolute Idea. This can be expressed only in

> "a unity of individuals, each of whom, perfectly individual through his perfect unity with all the rest, places before himself an end and finds the whole of the universe in complete harmony with that end."
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "This is the supreme reality - the only reality sub specie aeternitatis, the goal of the process of the universe sub specie temporis." [139]

But is this supreme reality also the supreme good? McTaggart believes so. It coincides with the supreme good. Each conscious being adequately expresses his individuality in one end with which he finds all other individuals to be in harmony. Thus "it will necessarily follow that the end is fulfilled. Here is a supreme good ready to our hands."[140]

1) Assumed, not demonstrated.

It seems that after all the supreme reality as such has turned out to be the supreme good. It appears that McTaggart is guilty of assuming that the universe of spirit is a moral universe and that the satisfaction which it eternally offers is morally good. Some selves are satisfied with low ideals. How then do we know that any universe that satisfies us

will be righteous?[141] The reason for McTaggart's failure to establish the moral nature of his universe will be discussed later.[142]

2) Results in the conviction of harmony essential to religion.

Here we shall be content to point out that McTaggart concludes that he has discovered the harmony necessary to religion. The dialectic proves in an abstract way that the universe must be both rational and righteous. But this is not complete knowledge. It is only an outline. It is necessary to determine the concrete character of this universe of spirit, or spirits.[143]

3) The supreme good is "the only reality sub specie aeternitatis, [and] the goal of the process of the universe sub specie temporis."

Another point to be emphasized here is that McTaggart holds this supreme good to be "the only reality sub specie aeternitatis [and] the goal of the process of the universe sub specie temporis."[139]

4) The supreme good not purely hedonistic.

He does not conceive it to be "purely hedonistic."

> "It contains pleasure . . . . but the pleasure is only one element of the perfect state. The supreme good is not pleasure as such, but this particular pleasant state."[140]

b. He distinguishes the supreme good from the moral criterion and rejects the former as useless for practical guidance.

The supreme good is not to be identified with the moral criterion.

> "They can be identical, no doubt, but they need not be so. The object of a criterion is merely practical - to guide our actions toward the good. . . ."[140]

The supreme good cannot serve this purpose. It tells us only what is the

nature of the supreme and timeless reality. It does not aid us in meeting our practical moral problems in this imperfect and changing world.

> "The reality contemplated by Hegel in his Absolute Idea is absolutely spiritual, absolutely timeless, absolutely perfect. Now none of us ever get a chance of performing an action the result of which would satisfy these three conditions. The result of any actions possible to us now would be a state in which spirit was still encompassed with matter, in which change still took place, and in which perfection, if rather nearer than before, was still obviously not attained.
>
> "It is useless then to test our actions by enquiring if they will realise the supreme good. None of them will do that, and we are reduced to considering which of them will enable us to reach rather nearer to supreme good than we were before." [144]

He adds that this consideration "is almost useless." It can never tell us which of two courses we should take. What we need is a practical criterion that will enable a man, willing to do the right, to decide between two courses of action both morally good and yet incompatible.

1) He rejects perfectionism as a moral criterion.

In the opinion of McTaggart, perfectionism, as a moral theory, fails to meet this requirement. The idea of perfection can only guide a man in choosing between the morally good and evil. If he had not been willing to choose the former he would not have sought guidance from an ethical criterion.[145] It follows that the idea of perfection, or of the supreme good is almost valueless as a guide to action. It can never assist us when we meet real difficulties. In these cases what help is the knowledge that the ultimate goal is a perfect and timeless reality?

> "such results as these can but rarely be available as guides to action. We learn by them what is the nature of that ideal, which, sub specie aeternitatis, is present in all reality, and which, sub specie temporis, is the goal towards which all reality is moving. But such an ideal is, sub specie aeternitatis, far too implicit, and sub specie temporis, far too distant, to allow us to use it in deciding on any definite course of action in the present. Nor can it be taken to indicate even the direc-

> tion in which our present action should move. For one of the great lessons of Hegel's philosophy is that, in any progress, we never move directly forwards, but oscillate from side to side as we advance. And so a step which seems to be almost directly away from our ideal may sometimes be the next step on the only road by which that ideal can be attained." [146]

From the dialectic we learn that sin is a necessary stage in progress toward perfection. Consequently we have no reason to believe that actions which seem immediately good will hasten the coming of the supreme good or that actions which seem immediately bad will delay its realization. We have reason to believe that this is not so in many cases.

> "To bring our conduct today as close as possible to the supreme good may be to help or to hinder the coming of the supreme good in all its perfection." [147]

a) If his reason for rejecting perfectionism is valid, any system of ethics is impossible.

These statements seem to advocate a complete ethical skepticism. In a searching criticism of McTaggart's ethics, G. E. Moore has pointed out that if these statements are to be taken seriously McTaggart has no right to any theory of ethics at all.[148] If the supreme good is the only reality sub specie aeternitatis, and the goal of the process of the universe sub specie temporis, and man is unable to tell whether his actions will hasten or delay the realization of that good, he has no reason at all to consider one action better than another, or to choose one moral criterion in preference to another.

b) His difficulty here due to contradiction between his perfect reality and the imperfection of the time process.

This criticism is valid. Yet it is only fair to remember that McTaggart is not consistently skeptical. Furthermore, his occasional skepticism

is rooted in the basic difficulty and contradiction of his system. He confesses that he is unable to reconcile the perfection of the timeless Absolute Reality with the temporal process, its apparent change and evil.[149] It is this difficulty, we believe, that causes him to waver between theoretical perfectionism and practical hedonism. If the universe is already complete and perfect, as he thinks his logic to have demonstrated, perfection would seem to be our goal and the categorical imperative of fundamental importance. But time and change and sin seem real. There seems to be a vast chasm between our imperfect present experience and the demonstrated perfection of the timeless Absolute. The latter seems to be utterly removed from the former. It would seem that the ideals of the Absolute cannot be identical with our ideals.[150] Thus in every day life may we not better forget the Absolute and depend upon a criterion connected with the hard facts of actual human experience? A calculation of pleasure-pain is the one most "ready to our hand." What harm if we adopt it? The dialectic process is inevitable and nothing that we may do can possibly retard its movement.[151] Even though our judgment should prove to be wrong, it will also prove ineffective.[152] Happily, the attainment of the good does not depend upon our action.[153]

We submit this as a fair summary of at least certain very prominent tendencies in McTaggart's ethical thought.[154] We believe that we have made a valid inference as to the theoretical source of his devil-may-care attitude toward ethical problems.

c) Yet he admits that we have means of deciding that one action is better than another.

i. In doing so he refutes his own refutation of perfectionism.

As we have said, McTaggart is not consistently skeptical. A radically skeptical statement may be followed by a sentence that is incompatible with skepticism. In his discussion of "The Supreme Good and the Moral Criterion" he follows the assertion that we have no reason to believe that our actions will help rather than hinder the coming of the supreme good, with the qualification that "We can see, to some extent, what conduct embodies the supreme good least imperfectly."[151] This is the fact that makes a theory of ethics possible. As soon as we know that right actions are those that will tend to "bring about, immediately, or in the comparatively near future which we can predict with reasonable certainty, the state which conforms as closely as possible to that perfection," we have a clue to a workable criterion.[151] This is the very fact upon which perfectionism builds. No perfectionist believes that for an ideal to be practical it must be grasped at once and completely realized at this one moment. Heaven is not reached by a single bound. The perfectionist would point out that a true ideal is a growing ideal that forever precedes us. His only assertion is that in being loyal to the best that he knows; in heeding his obligation to achieve the highest values available for him, he is growing in the direction of his ideal and in thus perfecting himself he is participating in the ultimate perfection of the universe. The perfectionist does not cherish the amoition "to become perfect as the crow flies," and he might grant, providing he is not averse to mixing his figures of speech, that to do so "will only lead . . . . into some blind alley from which" it will be necessary to retrace one's steps. Granting this, he will consider that McTaggart has also granted in the passages that follow, some of the principal facts upon which the perfectionist bases his theory.

"A certain degree of knowledge, of virtue, and of happiness, is appropriate and possible for every stage of the process of spirit. By the aid of reflection we may perceive the existence of a stage much higher than that in which we are. But the knowledge that we shall reach it some day is not equivalent to the power of reaching it at once. We are entitled to as much perfection as we are fit for, and it is useless to demand more . . . . . ."

"Nevertheless, the knowledge of the goal to which we are going may occasionally, if used with discretion, be a help in directing our course. It will be something if we can find out which parts of our experience are of value per se, and can be pursued for their own sake, and which parts are merely subsidiary. For however long it may take us to reach the Absolute, it is sometimes curiously near us in isolated episodes of life, and our attitude towards certain phases of consciousness, if not our positive actions, may be materially affected by the consideration of the greater or less adequacy with which those phases embody reality." [155]

. . . . . .

"For there are parts of our lives which, even as we live them, seem incomplete and merely transitory, having no value unless they lead on to something better. And there are parts of our lives which seem so fundamental, so absolutely desirable in themselves, that we could not anticipate without pain their absorption into some higher perfection, as yet unknown to us, and that we demand that they shall undergo no further change, except an increase in purity and intensity. Now we might be able to show of the first of these groups of experiences that they are, in fact, mere passing phases, with meaning only in so far as they lead up to and are absorbed in something higher. And we might even be able to show of the second that they are actually fundamental, lacking so far in breadth and depth, but in their explicit nature already revealing the implicit reality." [156]

McTaggart concedes, then, that we do have value experiences that are "actually fundamental, lacking so far in breadth and depth, but in their explicit nature already revealing the" ultimate goodness. If this be true the perfectionist cannot wonder that the Absolute is "sometimes curiously near us." Rather, the curious fact would be to have the ultimate goodness so far beyond the reach of human experience, to explain which it was postulated. The consistent conclusion would be that not only in "isolated episodes" of our lives, but in the most ordinary of our moral experiences, the Supreme Goodness is "curiously near us," as is the opportunity to achieve our moral destiny and to hasten the realization of the ultimate good.

To summarize: In granting that we may distinguish various degrees of the good in their respective tendencies to approximate the supreme good, McTaggart contradicts his ethical skepticism. Since this was advanced to disprove perfectionism as a criterion of morality, it follows that the foregoing objections to perfectionism are not valid.

> ii. He indicates that his pleasure-pain criterion is based on the assumption for which he rejects perfectionism, namely, that our knowledge of the supreme good is sufficient for practical guidance.

We shall attempt to show that McTaggart has based his hedonic criterion on the very assumption for which he has rejected perfectionism, - on the assertion that our knowledge of the supreme good is sufficient for practical guidance.

His pleasure-pain criterion is "merely practical." Its business is to guide our actions definitely toward the good.[157] But is this not an ambitious undertaking for any criterion, if the supreme good be so distant and impossible of approximation as McTaggart's most skeptical utterances assert? How can we be sure that "happiness is also an element of perfection;"[158] that the supreme good contains pleasure as an element;[159] and that "happiness is not by itself the supreme good, but any happiness, so far as it goes, is good, and any absence of happiness is bad?"[158] This implies that our experience furnishes a clue to the nature of the supreme good; that we can know when we are realizing at least one of its elements; and that this known constituent of the supreme good is pleasure or happiness.[160]

Probably McTaggart would reply to these charges by admitting them. There are evidences that his acceptance of the pleasure-pain criterion is not

based on its practical utility alone, but on the highly speculative theory that in the experience of pleasure we have our clearest insight into the nature of that state of harmonious love found in the timeless existence of Absolute Reality. In the following passage such a thought is definitely expressed.

> "And if our consciousness should ever free itself of the form of succession, there is no reason why pleasure should not be realised, like all the other elements of consciousness, in an eternal form. Indeed pleasure seems better adapted for the transition than the other elements of consciousness." [161]

And again:

> "the ideals of which we postulate the fulfillment are not absolutely the same ideals which would be found in a state of perfection. . . . . In so far, therefore, as our efforts are devoted to the increase of happiness, they will tend to produce a greater amount of harmony between individuals and their environment, and so will be directed to the increase of one moment of the supreme good."[162]

It seems then that we do have definite knowledge of the supreme good and that this knowledge is of very practical value. We can be certain that in increasing the experience of happiness we are helping to realize at least "one moment of the supreme good."

These passages prompt us to ask whether it is the experience of pleasure that McTaggart considers "fundamental," "absolutely desirable" in itself, and "of value <u>per se</u>." And does he think that since the rest of our ideals "are not absolutely the same ideals" to be found in Absolute Reality, the experiences of these are "merely subsidiary," having "meaning only in so far as they lead up to and are absorbed in something higher?" At least this much seems certain, - that his reason for rejecting perfectionism and accepting the hedonic criterion is not that the latter is practical and the former highly speculative, but that the former is based upon our clearest insight into the nature of the supreme good and that

by it we are enabled to see "what conduct embodies the supreme good least imperfectly."

iii. This raises the question as to whether pleasure is a trustworthy clue to the nature of the good.

But is McTaggart's evaluation to be accepted? In our experience of pleasure do we have our clearest insight into the nature of the supreme good?

i) Our answer will depend upon our conception of the good.

We have seen that McTaggart has failed to define the good and to distinguish between our ideals, desires and pleasures.[163] His language often lends itself to the interpretation that satisfaction itself is a good.

> "But instead of asserting that the satisfaction of some desires is better than that of others, because the former are directed to more perfect ideals, he seems to suggest that it is better because they are more fundamental. Nor does he anywhere try to prove . . . . that all desires for what is good are in fact fundamental . . . . and that all fundamental desires are in fact desires for what is good." [164]

Although McTaggart tells us that pleasure or happiness is a good, he nowhere attempts to justify this assertion. More than this, he makes admissions that are fatal to this position. For example:

> "It is possible that there may be qualitative differences of pleasure which might make a comparatively unpleasant state more truly desirable than one in which the pleasure was far greater."[165]

To us this seems true. But if so does it not invalidate a hedonic criterion? McTaggart's phrase "comparatively unpleasant" does not necessarily indicate a total absence of pleasure. Nevertheless it implies that pleasure in and for itself alone is not always to be chosen. If this distinction be true pleasure is not always a good. On the contrary it may be positively vicious. As such

it is not a correct criterion; nor is it our best clue to the nature of the supreme good.

ii) Our answer will also depend upon our conception of the supreme good.

(a) McTaggart's conception of love as the state in Absolute Reality.

We remember that McTaggart thinks pleasure better fitted "for the transition" into "an eternal form . . . . than the other elements of consciousness."[166] More than that, he holds that while "the supreme good is not pleasure as such" it is "this particular pleasant state."[167] Such a state will be a state of harmony for the ideals of each self will be fulfilled by all other selves.[167] This harmony is incompatible with striving or discontent or the necessity of choice.[168] In its enjoyment the self will be completely acquiescent.[169] This harmony is the ultimate aim and unity of knowledge and volition. When perfected these will be transcended in a higher unity that retains all that was valuable in both.[170] The "concrete and material content of such a life as this . . . . is one thing only - love." This does "not mean benevolence, even in its most empassioned form;" nor "the love of Truth, or Virtue, or Beauty, or anything else whose name can be found in a dictionary." Nor does it "mean sexual desire," but "passionate, all-absorbing, all-consuming love."[171]

(b) Is this state of ultimate love a moral experience?

Is this state of love a moral condition? McTaggart might reply that the adjective cannot be applied to a state that has transcended our imperfect categories of thought. If this is so it would seem that we have no right to talk about a condition so removed from our experience. Our con-

viction is that McTaggart has arrived at a predominantly logical conception which he vainly attempts to interpret in terms of concrete personal experience. In doing so he finds that terms describing the relatively passive states of consciousness most readily lend themselves to his purpose. The prominence of the terms "love," "pleasure," "harmony," "acquiescent," etc., supports this interpretation of his motive, as does the fact that he regards the experience of pleasure as best fitted for the transition into the all embracing unity. In his conception of the supreme good pleasure is the most prominent characteristic. "In that harmony alone we live," he says.[172] Again he implies that while we can be certain that ultimately there will be a union of perfection and pleasure, here and now we may occasionally be able to secure this harmony only by lowering our ideals to accommodate our environment.[173]

Our conclusion is that McTaggart's conception of the supreme good is primarily logical rather than moral. The harmony of which he speaks seems to be of a logical nature, difficult to interpret in ethical terms. In so far as it can be so interpreted, it is best described by terms expressing relatively passive states of consciousness. If this supreme good possesses moral character it cannot be adequately interpreted in terms of pleasure. If it is merely "this particular pleasant state,"[167] it is consistent with his hedonic criterion but void of any character that entitles it to the name "supreme <u>good</u>."

iii) Our answer will depend on whether pleasure, though not an infallible test of the good, is yet our only available test.

McTaggart himself has admitted that pleasure is not an infallible test of the good; that in and for itself it is not always to be chosen.[165] But it does not follow that he rejects the hedonic criterion. He does not

deny that this is difficult to apply.[174] He admits that there are cases to which it does not apply, when, for instance, the choice of pleasure would mean a sacrifice of ideals. In such a case he holds that there is no rule to follow and no reasonable solution.[175]

McTaggart declares that this "occasional failure of the only available criterion"[176] is due to our inability to compare heterogeneous goods "with any hope of discovering which [is] the more desirable."[177] When the desire for pleasure clashes with the interest of our ideals we are faced with an insoluble ethical problem. For we can never be sure "how much happiness will be more worth having than a given degree of development." [178]

McTaggart has modified his position at this point. In a note to the second edition of Studies in Hegelian Cosmology he declares that he now attributes "more validity and importance to immediate judgments of heterogeneous goods."[179] If he means to say that we can tell how much happiness would be worth a certain degree of development, he saves his hedonic criterion from embarrassment. But does he not also withdraw his objection to perfectionism by confessing that we can distinguish degrees of development toward our ideal?

(a) He admits that we are able to measure other elements of the good.

Our purpose is to show that McTaggart's original argument did not support his conclusion. In his discussion of McTaggart's ethics, G. E. Moore has called attention to the manner in which McTaggart concludes his discussion of the "failure of the only available criterion."[180]

> "Now we saw above that it was impossible to compare such elements with any hope of discovering which was the more desirable." (Italics ours.) [181]

The words "Now we saw above" are entirely misleading. McTaggart has not even attempted to demonstrate his conclusion. He probably refers to his long argument to prove that the idea of perfection cannot be of practical value.[182] But the force of the examples by which he would illustrate his argument rests upon the assumption that we can and do compare other elements of the good than pleasure, although the practical matter of deciding is often complex and difficult.

He remarks that "innumerable cases could be found" to prove the force of his contention and continues:

> "Public schools knock a great deal of pretence out of boys, and knock a certain amount of Philistinism into them. In heaven we shall be neither shams or Philistines. But are we nearer to heaven, if at this moment we buy genuineness with Philistinism, or buy culture with Schwärmerei? The man who answers that question would need to be deep in the secrets of the universe." [183]

All that this argument proves is that the situation is complex and difficult of solution on the basis of any criterion. If we were to decide the matter on the basis of the hedonic criterion it would be just as hard to decide whether genuineness plus Philistinism or culture plus Schwärmerei should be chosen. To know which combination would result in the greater happiness for the greater number a man "would need to be deep in the secrets of the universe." Regardless of the criterion to be used, the force of the example rests upon the fact that we <u>can</u> and <u>do</u> compare such heterogeneous goods as Philistinism and culture, genuineness and Schwärmerei.

(b) He admits that the hedonic criterion is difficult of application.

McTaggart's remaining objection to perfectionism is that it is difficult to apply. He has admitted that the same objection is valid in reference to the hedonic criterion.[174] It follows that on this ground he cannot disprove the former without rejecting the latter.

CHAPTER FOUR.

D. The metaphysical nature of the self.

We have discussed McTaggart's views of the self as studied by the sciences of psychology and ethics, and as related to physical nature. These studies have furnished the data which McTaggart must interpret in his metaphysical conclusions. They have also made necessary a more or less preliminary discussion of his general philosophical position. We are now ready for our final study of his general theories and method. We shall proceed by discussing two main subjects: "The metaphysical nature of the self," and "Is the harmony of the universe due to a supreme person, or God?"

1. The priority of logic over ethics in McTaggart's system.

In considering McTaggart's psychological and ethical views of the self we have noticed the influence of his general method. That his method and interest are logical rather than ethical, relatively abstract rather than empirical, structural rather than functional, will be our contention in the following chapters.

a. Evident in his interpretation of metaphysics as the discovery of a priori principles.

McTaggart describes himself as a "thinker who accepts Hegel's logic."[184] According to him "Hegel's primary object in his dialectic is to establish the existence of a logical connection between the various categories" of experience.[185] He goes on to say that this connection is of such a kind that any category may be found to lead on to and involve another on the pain of contradiction. In the same way the second category

will lead to a third "and the process continues until at last we reach the goal of the dialectic in a category which betrays no instability."[185]

It would seem that this might be the method of any philosophical enquiry. The aim is to find the "logical connection between the various categories" of experience. But McTaggart describes the nature of this logical connection as one of "inherent necessity" rather than of mere probability. Otherwise it could not "be safely applied beyond the sphere in which it had been verified by experience."[186] The dialectical "process is one of pure thought only." The Absolute Idea "can be deduced from any piece of experience whatever."[187] It has been reached through "a priori conclusions derived from the investigation of the nature of pure thought." [188] These conclusions are independent of experience in the sense that the laws of formal logic are independent. They are "the only conditions under which we can experience anything at all." [187]

1) Necessary for philosophy to recognize and investigate these principles.

What kind of certainty does McTaggart attribute to his conclusions? In the process of arriving at the Absolute Idea the dialectic has demonstrated that the physical world can only be conceived in terms of spirit and that reality must consist in a differentiated unity.[189] If it has not decided the question as to the existence of God, it has at least made it very difficult to believe him existent.[190] Now such conclusions may or may not be valid. They may or may not be the best possible hypotheses for the interpretation of experience. But it is evident that they cannot possess the certainty attaching to the propositions of formal logic. If McTaggart is thinking of the latter kind of certainty when he speaks of the deductive and a priori

character of his conclusions he is in error.

Philosophy must recognize and investigate a priori principles. To point out that the mind inevitably thinks in terms of cause and effect, unity, plurality, space, time, purpose, etc., is an essential part of its task. But philosophy errs to suppose that all of its generalities may possess the certainty of these necessities of all thought. As soon as we quit the realm of pure thought for the concrete fullness of experience, we must proceed by means of the most reasonable hypothesis. McTaggart does not make the mistake of believing that all his conclusions possess a priori certainty. In Studies in Hegelian Cosmology he is concerned with "the application, to subject matter empirically known, of à priori conclusions derived from the investigation of the nature of pure thought."[191] He is discussing the questions of immortality, the personality of the Absolute, the supreme good and moral criterion, punishment, etc. In doing so he professes only to deduce his conclusions "from propositions relating to pure thought." The question which we are not able to answer concerns the kind of necessity which he claims for the latter propositions.

2) Such principles must always be tested by the concrete facts of experience.

a) McTaggart insists that the dialectic is not divorced from experience.

McTaggart insists that the dialectic is not divorced from experience. He emphasizes the fact that thought must begin with experience. Its existence implies that something is already given.[192] Without the data of experience the dialectic could not exist.[193] In fact the dialectic process is but an interpretation of any piece of experience whatsoever.[194] It springs

from the mind's demand for a whole-idea, an interpretation of experience in all its fullness.[194] As soon as the understanding sets up a concept the whole-idea begins to work upon it, driving it on to its antithesis, then to a higher synthesis, and so on until the process is complete and an interpretation of experience as a whole is reached. The dialectic process is but a correction of the understanding's abstractions from the completeness of any one experience.

> "the motive to the whole advance is the presence in experience, and in our minds as they become conscious of themselves in experience, of the concrete reality, of which all categories are only descriptions, and of which the lower categories are imperfect descriptions." [195]

The progress of the dialectic is from the abstract to the concrete. Thus there occurs "the deduction of the world of Nature from the Logic, and of the world of Spirit from the world of Nature."[196] Spirit is the goal of the process just as it has been the implicit motive. It is "the logical prius of the system."[197]

It is evident that McTaggart regards the dialectic process as an interpretation of experience rather than an abstraction from it. Our criticism is to the effect that McTaggart has emptied the concept of Spirit of much of its content. To him it <u>is</u> but a <u>logical</u> prius. It does not represent the fullness of personal life. It consistently leaves out of account both the ethical a priori and ethical intuition, both form and content of ethical experience.

b) McTaggart ignores the ethical a priori in his conception of Spirit.

In our discussion of McTaggart's ethical theory we criticized his superficial treatment of moral obligation.[198] He fails to take account of

the ethical a priori. This is as significant for a system of philosophy as are the a priori principles of science. Later we shall see how fatal to his system is this neglect of the "ought."[199] Here we shall but point out that McTaggart considers ethics more of an appendage to, than a vital part of, philogophy. In concluding Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic he discusses the practical significance of philosophy. He points out that philosophy is able to demonstrate "the general conviction of the rationality and righteousness of the universe," and adds that it is not necessary to apply the dialectic process to the specific "facts around us." With these the finite sciences must deal.

> "And we shall find in common sense, and in the general principles of ethics, the possibility of pursuing a coherent and reasonable course of action, even if we do not know the precise position at which we are in the dialectic process towards the perfection which is the goal of our efforts." [200]

That is, even though our philosophy may be of little practical use we can be guided by common sense and the general principles of ethics. This is to make ethics but a practical appendix to philosophy; to ignore the "ought" until the "is" has yielded a conception of ultimate reality that is essentially static and logical; then to force the fact of "oughtness" to fit a philosophical conclusion doomed to be abstract because of a preliminary and consistent neglect of one-half the data. To use McTaggart's terminology, not only does he begin with an abstraction of the understanding but the whole-idea, implicit in, and motivating the entire process, is but a part-idea. Thus when at the end of the process it recovers its concrete wholeness, it has recovered but an abstraction. Consequently it proves that the universe is rational without demonstrating that it is righteous. McTaggart never establishes his right to apply the predicate "righteous" to the universe.[201]

c) In speaking of the empirical data which the dialectic must interpret McTaggart usually ignores ethical intuition. He thinks only of the data of sensation.

McTaggart rarely recognizes that the data upon which pure thought must work consist of moral as well as sensuous intuition. He is at pains to prove that his processes of pure thought are not sterile because independent of any particular experience.[202] Pure thought, he says, taken by itself is as much of an abstraction as the data of intuition. Pure thought always implies a given element. It is found only in combination with empirical data. However, the data of which McTaggart speaks are the data of sensation. He almost invariably ignores ethical intuition and in doing so he is guilty of an abstraction. This is evident in the following passage.

> "For if the idea is, when met with in reality, always perfect and concrete, it is no less true that it is, when met with in reality, invariably, and of necessity, found in connection with sensuous intuition, without which even the relatively concrete idea which ends the Logic is an illegitimate abstraction." [203]

Our contention is that the "relatively concrete idea which ends the Logic <u>is</u> an <u>illegitimate</u> <u>abstraction</u>" (italics ours) because it has not attempted to interpret the ethical data with which it is always found "when met with in reality."

b. McTaggart's interest in the self is logical rather than ethical.

1) Logical and structural versus functional approach. McTaggart versus Sorley.

If the foregoing criticism be valid, we may expect McTaggart to manifest a logical, rather than an ethical interest in the self, for the latter is essentially a functional interest. The conviction that the nature of the self is our best key to the meaning of the universe might be reached

through a study of value experience, its personal and objective reference. This would be the distinctly ethical approach to philosophy. This is the method and approach of W. R. Sorley in his Moral Values and the Idea of God. McTaggart's approach is entirely different. There is no reason why it should be otherwise. Philosophy has a right to choose her own starting point. She may begin with any particular experience, aspect of experience or problem. The only requirement is that she take everything into account and correct her preliminary abstraction. It seems to us that Sorley has done this. He begins with the "ought" in its relation to the "is;" studies the significance of moral experience; relates his ethical data to the findings of science and offers a synoptic view of human experience. McTaggart, on the other hand, begins with a logical "is;" ignores the "ought;" and arrives at a final theory to accomodate which he does violence to the facts of ethical experience. His moral theory is but a deduction from, rather than a contribution to, his metaphysical conclusion. It is not strange that his metaphysics refuses to nourish the child that she has not borne.. We repeat that his interest in the self is mainly logical.

2) For him the self is not essentially a center of value achievement. It is a necessary differentiation of the Absolute. He finds the self in harmony with its universe of other selves, which necessarily express the Absolute.

This is evident in his conception of the self as a fundamental differentiation of the Absolute. He arrives at this view through a study of the Hegelian triad Life, Cognition and Absolute Idea.[204] The category of Life tells us that we must think in terms of both unity and plurality.

> "reality is a unity differentiated into a plurality (or a plurality combined into a unity) in such a way that the whole meaning and significance of the unity lies in its being differentiated into that particular plurality, and that the whole meaning and significance of

the parts of the plurality lies in their being combined into that particular unity." [205]

But how can such a unity exist? If the individuals are real and the unity exists only in them, the unity would seem to be false and the individuals to form but an aggregate. On the other hand if the unity is real and if it expresses the whole meaning and significance of the individuals, it would seem to swallow up the individuals. This dilemma forces us to the category of cognition. In the act of knowledge the individual reproduces the system of which he is a part. Here is an individual expressing his individuality in the way that he grasps the unity to which he belongs.[58] The conclusion follows:

> "The Absolute must be differentiated into persons, because no other differentiations have vitality to stand against a perfect unity, and because a unity which was undifferentiated could not exist." [206]

McTaggart maintains that both unity and individuals are real. The unity is real because it is found "in that special and unique nature which distinguishes one individual from another," "and not merely in the common nature which the individuals share. . . ." The individuals are real for the uniqueness of each "is contained in its harmony with the others." McTaggart believes that there is only one state of consciousness fitted to express such a condition. Only in love is the self truly individual and yet identified with the not-self.[207] In Absolute Reality love is "the relation which binds individuals together." Being complete, "all relations, all reality, will have been transformed into it." [208]

a) The truth in this conception.

This is the Absolute Reality and Supreme Good as conceived by McTaggart. Is it his answer to the question raised in his definition of

religion?[209] As such it merits both positive and negative criticism. We shall now state what we conceive to be the truth and value of the conception.

i. As to the philosophical method.

At least in motive, McTaggart's logic is organic. He has recognized the place of both analysis and synopsis, Understanding and Reason, in philosophy. His conception is that of system rather than of elements.

ii. The aim is to account for both individuality and unity.

McTaggart has aimed to account for both the individuality and the unity of experience. The fact that he does not establish the reality of the latter need not detract from his insight into the necessity of doing so. Many other advocates of the Absolute would have made the unity real at the expense of the individuals. McTaggart refuses to do this. He can attribute no meaning at all to "the inclusion of one self in another."[53] His refusal to conceive the Absolute as personal may also be due to his willingness to look the facts of evil in the face.[210] This readiness to take seriously the fact of evil and the uniqueness of the self is to be commended. In view of the general trend of his system, this checking of logical motive by empirical fact is of special interest.

iii. The self is the key to ultimate reality.

McTaggart emphasizes the importance of the self as a key to the nature of ultimate reality. His theory that Absolute Reality is expressible only in terms of individuals united in an all-absorbing love suggests

an important truth. Value is to be found in human experience and there alone. The self is the center and home of value. If value endures, the self must be more than a transient episode in the flux of physical events. Respect for the life of value implies respect for personality. We may well conclude that if immortality be a fact we shall one day clearly see that devotion to the good is logically identical with personal love, that is, with the worship of perfected Selfhood, the home of all value.[211]

iv. A basis for religion.

McTaggart's conception furnishes a basis for religion as he conceives it. For him it assures the self of an ultimate harmony with its universe. He regards his conclusions as mystical and asserts that all true philosophy must be mystical, not in method, but in its conclusions. Even though he denies the existence of God he feels that no metaphysical conclusion can rob us of the right and power to feel reverence.[212]

b) The error in this conception.

i. The harmony seems to be static and logical instead of functional and moral. Consequently it falsifies experience.

We believe that this conception is primarily logical.[213] It has been reached by reason of a demand for an explanation of the facts of individuality and universality. It is the solution for a logical problem.[214] McTaggart has made a determined effort to find a synthesis for this thesis and antithesis. Furthermore, his solution is in terms of conscious experience. But he makes use of that experience whose relative passivity is best adapted to express a state of logical balance.[215] He then proceeds to prove, by means of the dialectic, that all other human activities, such as moral

achievement and knowledge, are but "distorted shadows" of this absolute (and logical) perfection.[170] He seems to regard the moral life as but a passing phase of human activity. He believes that "perfect volition would mean perfect acquiescence in everything," that is, perfect happiness.[216] The happiness of the Absolute is not to be disturbed by any activity.

> "Nor can virtue have a place in our ideal, even in the form of aspiration. Together with every other imperfection, it must be left outside the door of heaven. For virtue implies choice and choice implies either uncertainty or conflict. In the realised ideal neither of these could exist." [217]

ii. Being static and logical it cannot account for the facts of evil.

In our discussion of McTaggart's ethical view of the self we saw that he regards the Absolute Reality or Supreme Good as the only reality sub specie aeternitatis.[219] It follows that in some way the universe must be already perfect. Evil is unreal, if the result of the logic is valid.[220] If evil is unreal all selves must be necessarily good. Here appears the necessity of McTaggart's ethical determinism. To save the demonstrated fact of a logical harmony in the universe he must deny that evil is real.

> "To one who fully comprehends the facts, Sin would always appear too futile to be taken seriously." [221]

Later we shall see that this conception is incompatible with the fact of change also.[220]

iii. In spite of his assertions to the contrary, his plurality is but an aggregate.

McTaggart insists that his Absolute is not a mere aggregate of individuals.[222] The unity is a real unity. It is the expression of the

individuality of each of its members. This is not to attribute to it a distinct personality, however. If the Absolute is "to be called a person because it is a spiritual unity, then every College, every goose-club, every gang of thieves, must also be called a person."[223] We should be willing to revise this statement and say that if every gang of thieves, goose-club and college is to be called a unity, then, and only then, McTaggart's Absolute should also be called a unity. The fact that he consistently refers to it as an organism or as a "super-organic unity"[224] does not invalidate the criticism of Miss M. W. Calkins:

> "So long as, in Mr. McTaggart's terms, 'the unity has no meaning but in the differentiations,' it cannot help being an aggregate - in other words, an externally related combination of parts."[225]

iv. The unity might be saved by granting the personality of the Absolute. But since the Absolute means "all that there is," to grant its personality would be to deny the reality of its parts, i.e., of finite individuals.

To Miss Calkins' criticism McTaggart might reply that her solution not only preserves the unity but destroys the reality of the individuals. To us this seems a valid objection to the conception of the unity as that of an Absolute. If we regard "all that there is" as an individual, i.e., as a whole "whose unique nature is manifested in the particular realities which form its parts," we go to the opposite extreme of reducing the individuals to mere appearances.[226] In this criticism we agree with McTaggart. Our suggestion is that we conceive the unity as an Individual, but not as an all-inclusive Individual. Rather, as a Supreme Person upon whom finite individuals are dependent, but with whom they are not identical.[227] This view shares the pluralism of McTaggart's view, but it would think of the unity as grounded in a Supreme Person, the continual creator of the

common physical-logical-moral order, and of the limited selves. These God would have created as unique individuals dependent upon his creative activity, yet forever distinct from him. This view will be elaborated in the last chapter of this paper.[228] It is important to remember that this is not a problem of logic alone. As will be argued in chapter five, the advantage of the view here outlined is that it may also do justice to the functional aspect of experience, especially to moral experience.

To summarize: We have made four criticisms of McTaggart's view of Absolute Reality. 1. We have said that it was primarily a logical conception and thus not able to do justice to moral experience. 2. Being static and logical it cannot explain the existence of evil. It regards the universe as eternally perfect and finite selves as determined by the good. 3. In denying that the Absolute is a person McTaggart reduces his plurality to an aggregate. 4. This is due to his interpretation of the ~~Absolute~~ unity as "all that exists." His pluralism might be retained by conceiving the unity as existing in a Supreme Person upon whom finite selves would be dependent yet from whom they would be forever distinct.

c) The immortality and preexistence of the soul cannot be deduced by logic alone.[229]

i. This particular plurality eternally necessary to the unity.

That McTaggart's interest in the self is primarily logical is evident in his theory of immortality. He holds that we can believe the self to be immortal only if we can show that it is an essential and permanent expression of the Absolute.

McTaggart has found that Absolute Reality is a differentiated

unity in which "the unity has no meaning except in its expression in the plurality, the plurality has no meaning except its combination in the unity."[230] This is a logical analysis of reality. It reveals what is timelessly true. The dialectic process does not take place in time.[231] So to interpret it would involve us in the contradiction that what is but partially real (the lower categories) exists. Absolute Reality expresses what is necessarily and timelessly true. Its internal relations do not change. The unity and its differentiations eternally imply each other.

> "here we have a union between the two sides which is so close that we are forbidden to think anything in the one irrelevant to its relation to the other. The conclusion would seem to be that the element of immediacy can change no more than the element of pure thought, and that therefore absolute reality as a whole must be regarded as unchanging." [232]

McTaggart has found that only persons can be regarded as fundamental differentiations of the Absolute. Finite selves are the "element of immediacy" described above. It follows that each is a necessary differentiation of the Absolute. As an expression of the unity it is an eternal necessity. Therefore it must be immortal.

> "The plurality has no meaning except to be combined into the unity. But the unity has no meaning except to be differentiated into the plurality. And not into some plurality or other, but into that particular plurality." [233]

ii. Immortality is thought to involve preexistence because the appeal is to logical structure rather than to moral experience.

i) If self essential to Absolute now, always essential?

If valid this argument proves both the preexistence and immortality of the self. McTaggart stands by this conclusion. He believes that this is the only valid proof of immortality; that if a man did not exist in the

past there is no reason to believe that he may not cease to exist in the future.[233]

> "Our only guarantee of the immortality of the self would be a demonstration that the existence of that self was essential to the Absolute." [234]

ii) McTaggart believes that the loss of memory and the fact of evil are not conclusive objections to his theory.

Such a demonstration McTaggart believes his logic to have yielded. He recognizes that the absence of memory of previous existences may be urged as an objection to his conclusion. But he does not consider memory essential to identity of personality. It is conceivable, he says, that my present character is the result of the total tendencies of my previous existences, and that the present will bequeath its condensed results in my character in future existences.[235] Many things that we have forgotten have left an impression on our lives. It is not necessary that we should remember all our present experiences to have them determining factors in lives to come. Furthermore the inexplicable affinity of soul for soul can best be referred to relationships formed in previous existences and renewed without memory here.[236]

McTaggart is aware that his theory implies the eternal perfection of the Absolute and its differentiations. This contradicts our experience of time, change, limitation and evil.

> "The difficulty is no doubt serious enough. But it is . . . . a difficulty which applies equally to all idealistic theories, however interpreted. It is nothing less than the old difficulty of the origin of evil. And for this . . . . idealism has no solution."[237]

He sees no decisive objection to a belief in both the preexistence and the immortality of the self.

iii) McTaggart suggests a moral argument that would be valid if God existed.

In outlining McTaggart's view of immortality we have had no occasion to refer to a moral argument. This is what we might expect. McTaggart would call his demonstration philosophical, as opposed to an ethical argument.[238] In attacking this problem he has been concerned to discover the necessary structure of thought. The significance of ethical experience does not interest him. He bases his conclusion on a logical "is," or in other terms, he studies a cross section of our thought to show that we must think of selves as permanent expressions of the unity of all thought.

Interesting is his admission that if God existed and were known to be good a different kind of argument might be available. In such a case it might be able to demonstrate immortality apart from preëxistence. For a creator "to annihilate existing persons might well be a much more serious blemish on the universe than to postpone the creation of persons not yet existent." "And so," he continues, "if immortality could be based on this ground at all, we might prove that a being would never cease to exist in the future, although he had formerly not existed."

As one who denies the existence of God, McTaggart believes "that immortality cannot be based on the ground."[239] However it is instructive to observe that as soon as he introduces ethical considerations he finds it possible to consider the question of immortality apart from that of preëxistence.

iv) This argument developed. The decisive question is not whether I have had a previous existence but whether I now discover myself to be a citizen of a moral order with a task that is by nature endless.

This suggests our next contention. If we are to consider not only the facts of logical structure but also the facts of ethical processes as

data for metaphysics, we may arrive at a proof of immortality that is not involved in the question of preëxistence. If I discover that I am now a citizen of a moral order whose values I recognize as binding upon me, I may be led to believe in a Supreme Person as the home and ground of this order. As McTaggart has suggested, such a Person, being the eternal Goodness, could well be trusted with the fate of the moral beings whom he has created. Perhaps I shall find that by nature I am fitted and inclined to realize values which my fragmentary temporal existence gives me no time nor opportunity to achieve. The life of value may prove to be by nature endless.[240] If so, the perfection of the universe and of each self will be in its perfectibility.[240] And I may be forced to conclude that a moral universe will not offer the commanding vision of values worth achieving only to arouse a vain hope and a noble but futile ambition. This we conceive to be the distinctly moral argument. It emphasizes the significance of ethical process. It furnishes a reason for creation. It suggests that God calls finite selves into being in order to coöperate with him in an endless achievement of value. It also furnishes a basis for religion. In the objective reference of our value judgments it finds proof of the existence of a moral order. It begins with the sense of obligation and the facts of value experience and discovers, rather than assumes, a universe in moral harmony with the self. But this harmony is more of a task than a gift. It is not to be acquiesced in but obeyed and achieved. Its reward is not passive enjoyment but the joy of willing, disciplined pursuit of the good. We shall see whether such a theory will not better explain the facts of change and evil than the view that ultimate reality is already perfect.[241]

iii. He rejects materialistic objections to immortality.

Early in our study we considered McTaggart's proof that the physical universe must be conceived in terms of spirit.[242] The proof we accepted as valid. It undermines the objection to immortality founded upon the mind's dependence upon the brain.[243] But even if the brain, as a part of the physical world, be of the nature of spirit, must we not still say that its existence is essential to all mental life? According to McTaggart such a suggestion only shows that some body is necessary to my self. An instantaneous change to another body at death is conceivable.[244] But this change might not be necessary. The fact that the self has a body proves only that "while a self has a body, that body is essentially connected with the self's mental life."[245] It is possible that the self, freed from the body, may have other means of securing its mental data.

iv. Criticism of his theory of series of existences without memory.

McTaggart believes that we shall "have many lives - perhaps many millions of lives, and perhaps an infinite number."[246] There will be complete loss of memory between any two existences.[247] McTaggart anticipates that this theory will be met with the assertion that "we might as well be mortal . . . . as immortal without a memory beyond the present life."[248]

i) McTaggart's replies to this objection.

(a) In Absolute Reality all events in time will be timelessly present; thus nothing lost or forgotten.

He has several replies to this objection. Perhaps his fundamental thought is that in Absolute Reality the time series will have disappeared and "then the reality which now forms a time-series will be timelessly present

in a way which would render memory quite superfluous."[248] The meaning seems to be that everything now apparently forgotten will be present to our thought. The loss of memory is but seeming loss. Everything of value will be restored.

(b) Memory not necessary to continuity of personal life.

As we have seen above[248a] he also replies that the effect of our present lives will appear in condensed result in future existences. Only memory is discontinuous. Each life has its effect upon the next. All that has been won or achieved in one life will be present in strength of mind and latent ability in other existences.[249]

(c) Personal relations of one existence determine those of future existences.

The third reply is that love is the final and determining force in the universe. "With or without memory love will have its way." The very fact of love proves that two people belong together. Even though former experiences and associations are forgotten; even though there might be a separation for an existence or more, the bond of love will assert itself and those whose existences are bound up together will be reunited.[250]

ii) Objections to these replies.

(a) The first reply will not interest those who reject McTaggart's conception of ultimate reality.

(b) Memory essential to identity of personal life.

This objection has to do not only with the practical value of immortality without memory but with the theoretical possibility. McTaggart's

view seems to contradict the definition of a self as a time-transcending, self-identical unity. McTaggart labors to prove that it is no abstract Ding an sich that he has in mind. It is rather a substance which expresses its whole nature in its attributes.

> "If, therefore, the attributes were exactly the same, so would the substance be, and I should not be annihilated at all. In order that there should be a new self, the annihilation and the creation must cause a breach in the continuity of the attributes." [251]

Then the question becomes, Is memory one of the essential attributes of the self?

McTaggart reminds us that even in this life we do not remember much of the past. Yet its value has not been lost. We can be wiser for having had the discipline of an education even though we have forgotten many of the specific facts.[252] Valuable experience leaves its deposit not only in memory but in strengthened mind. This is partially true, no doubt. Yet it is doubtful whether anything or influence can be considered a part of myself that is gone forever past recall. Many past experiences are implicit in memory. Some could be brought back in memory only by a very strong stimulus. Those that are beyond the possibility of recall can hardly be considered as belonging to me.

In connection with every organism there is probably a hierarchy of selves. As I have been writing one of those selves has been alert to the ticking of the clock. I, the person who is writing, have been quite oblivious to the clock's presence and activity. Now if the clock were suddenly removed from the room, no doubt this subordinate self would remind me that the room seemed unusually quiet. If I were too busy to heed its message and to ask for particulars, I should know no more of the incident. But if I were to relax and assume the attitude "Why?" "What?" the infor-

mation would be instantaneously supplied. Now usually I pay no attention to the clock's presence. Yet, on occasion, I realize that it has been present and that the information as to its presence has been continually at my command. The point is that the awareness of the clock's presence belongs to a subordinate self and becomes mine only on occasion. I have no memory at all that the clock was here yesterday evening. Probably my subordinate knew of its presence. But I did not. The experience was not my own. I have no memory of it. It may be that some such view will be necessary to explain the experiences entirely beyond recall of memory. If in memory no trace of them remains, they have never been my experiences. The value of knowledge does not consist only in "amassed facts." But probably a fact that is completely lost was never my fact. Like the ticking of the clock it was known to another; not to me. I believe that Tsanoff is right when he says that the identity of self of which McTaggart speaks is not the identity of a conscious unity but of the scholastic simple-substance.[253]

(c) Love can hardly "have its way" without the aid of memory.

McTaggart's last reply is so highly fanciful that criticism is difficult, if not unnecessary. If no memory of our love and associations remains, may it not be that we shall meet others for whom we shall have a stronger affection than any ever before experienced?[254] To be sure that lovers will meet, reexperience and deepen their devotion, we must know not only that "love will have its way" but that it will have the help of memory.

CHAPTER FIVE.

II. IS THE HARMONY OF THE UNIVERSE DUE TO A SUPREME PERSON, i.e., TO GOD?

In the course of our study we have frequently referred to McTaggart's denial of God's existence.[255] Our references have made it clear that we dissent from this view. Thus the negative character of the following chapter may be anticipated. In general the treatment will be negative in regard to McTaggart's own argument, but positive in the affirmation of views which he rejects, as we believe, without good reasons.

A. Definition of the term "God."

McTaggart rightly defines the term "God" to mean a self-conscious being. He reminds us that this is the meaning of the word in western theology. To give it a different meaning is to cause needless confusion.[256] That Hegel used the term in a special philosophic sense has resulted in a misinterpretation of his Absolute. According to McTaggart, Hegel thought of God, not as a personal being, but as a society of persons.[257] But by his constant use of the word "God" to designate the Absolute, Hegel encouraged the belief that he thought of the Absolute as an individual.[258] McTaggart will not invite such a misunderstanding of his own view. By "God" he means "a being who is personal, supreme, and good."[259] His personality means self-consciousness; his supremacy, that he is at least the most powerful of beings; his goodness, that he is "of such a nature that he would be rightly judged to be more good than evil."[259] Of these three attributes McTaggart considers personality the most significant. An impersonal being could not love men. It could not be wise or good. Neither could it serve as an object of religious emotion. God, then, must be defined as a person.[260]

B. The question for McTaggart assumes this form, Is the Absolute personal?

We have seen that McTaggart speaks of ultimate reality as the Absolute. For him, then, the question of the existence of God will assume this form, Is the Absolute a person?

1. McTaggart's Absolute a structural, logical conception.

The fact that McTaggart refers to ultimate reality as the Absolute is significant. In contrast to the functional and personal conception, God, it emphasizes structure and logical analysis. The dialectic, for McTaggart is not a process in time. It is an analysis of timelessly existing relations.[261] We have repeatedly pointed out the abstract, logical motive of McTaggart's system. We have seen that it determines the nature of the whole-idea and thus of the Absolute. For the sake of emphasis we shall repeat this argument, - that McTaggart's Absolute is almost wholly a logical, structural concept.

2. His Absolute a "need of cognition" not of value experience. Demand for logical, not moral, wholeness is the motive of his system.

In defending the validity of the dialectic McTaggart replies to Hartmann's charge that the longing for the Absolute of which Hegel speaks is but the desire to smuggle back into philosophy the God whom Kant had banished from metaphysics.[262] In his defense of the Absolute Idea McTaggart speaks in his most characteristic tone. Or, to change the figure, in this situation his mind assumes its natural posture so that we have no difficulty in securing a life-like portrait. What we observe is the striking prominence of the logical features.

The section is too long to be quoted in full.[262] However, the passage should be read in its entirety for a thorough understanding of McTaggart. He states that he is not certain whether Hartmann means to say that Hegel's longing for the Absolute is "indulged only in the interest of religion and ethics, or whether he admits that it is demanded . . . . by the nature of knowledge." He proceeds to point out that "God, however is an ideal whose reality may be demanded on the part either of theoretical or of practical reason;" that while Hegel's interest in the Absolute may have been "excited from the side of ethics and religion rather than of pure thought," the whole motive power of his system is "the desire for complete knowledge, and the impatience of knowledge which is seen to be unsatisfactory."[263] Becoming more autobiographical McTaggart adds, "The philosopher does not believe in the Absolute merely because he desires it should exist," rather "The need of the Absolute is . . . . a need of cognition."[264]

The predominance of the logical motive is evident. God <u>may be</u> an ideal of the practical reason but in this case he <u>is</u> "a need of cognition." He is an ideal of complete knowledge, - a desire for wholeness in our speculative conceptions. Now this desire for completeness is a legitimate demand of the mind. But it is not a desire for God as McTaggart has defined him.[265] The theoretical reason <u>by itself</u> does not postulate God as an ideal nor by itself demand his reality. It demands only a complete knowledge of the physical world as a whole. This may logically involve a denial of the independent existence of matter and a view of it as of the nature of mind. But even when so conceived it leads only to an ideal of logical completeness, or to mind as the universalizing particular, the ground of the logical order, able to reconcile the particularity and universality of speculative thought. It has not asked nor assumed anything concerning the moral character of the

world as a whole. Therefore it cannot postulate God as an ideal as McTaggart has (correctly) defined him.

McTaggart makes it clear that his Absolute is but a "need of cognition." We have seen that he identifies philosophy with his dialectical method which is an investigation of the nature of pure thought.[266] Thus it is decisive when he here contrasts the practical ethical and religious interest in philosophy with the demands of pure thought. The evident tendency is to relegate the ethical demand for wholeness to the plane of desire and ignore it in the interpretation of the Absolute Idea, the motive power of dialectical process. McTaggart elsewhere states that spirit is the logical prius of the system.[267] But we have previously observed this idea of spirit to be a logical, rather than fully personal, concept.[268] His whole-idea is a concept of static, logical completeness, incapable of conveying the idea of personal and moral process. Therefore it inevitably issues in a conception of the Absolute that is logical rather than completely personal.

3. His Absolute a principle of unity; not a personality. Exhausted in the individuals which exist <u>in</u> but not <u>for</u> the unity.

Since McTaggart's Absolute is but "a need of cognition" we are prepared to have him deny that it is personal. We have seen that his interest in the self is as a logical principle of individuality.[269] We may expect that a similar interest will dictate his conception of the Absolute. This proves to be the case. He denies that it can be a person because in his conception of Absolute Reality the unity is fully expressed in the nature of the individuals. The unity "has no meaning except to be differentiated into the plurality."[270]

> "The unity and the individuals are identical - the unity has no nature except to be the individuals." [270a]

While the unity exists in and for the individuals, they exist in, but not for, the unity.

> "Since, then, the individuals cannot be for the unity, the dialectic gives us no reason to suppose that the unity either is a conscious being, or possesses any qualities analogous to consciousness. In that case it gives us no reason to suppose that the Absolute, as a whole, is personal." [271]

Just as McTaggart's interest in the self is as a principle of individuality, a necessary differentiation of the Absolute, so is he interested in the Absolute as an abstract logical concept. As such it cannot be a personality.

a. For this reason his Absolute cannot even solve the purely logical problem of particular versus universal.

1) His plurality an aggregate.

McTaggart anticipates that some may regard this as an atomistic conception.[272] It is our conviction that it must be so regarded. McTaggart seeks to obviate the criticism by insisting that the unity is a real unity. But verbal insistence is not logical demonstration. The fact that he refers to his Absolute as a "super-organic unity,"[273] in our opinion, does not invalidate the charge that his Absolute is but an aggregate of externally related individuals. Consequently it does not solve even the purely logical problem in the interest of which it was advanced.

Experience indicates that finite selves are real unities, able to think and interpret the larger unity in which they find themselves. But does it permit the view that finite selves in relation constitute this larger unity? Does it lead us to believe that the larger unity is dependent on, and exhausted in, the finite individuals? We think not. For on this experience the universal features of finite experience would be a mystery.

On such a theory the principles of mathematics and the laws of nature are but the relations of finite selves. This is to leave the relations themselves, their seeming independence and universality, and our experience of discovering them, unexplained.

Miss Calkins has urged this objection to McTaggart's view of the Absolute.

> "if ultimate reality were a composite of completely related terms, and if the relations between the terms were qualities of the terms, each for each, then the relations would themselves need relating with each other, for each would belong to some particular reality."[274]

2) McTaggart's reply: "between" as ultimate as "in."

McTaggart would reply to such a criticism by insisting that the conception of "between" is as ultimate as the conception of "in," and that therefore we do not need to seek a ground <u>in</u> which the relations of finite selves may inhere.[275] This is partially true. If we are to regard finite individuals as real and as possessing moral freedom we must grant that each individual's thought and choice are unique. They belong to him alone. They need not have been precisely what they are. Their character is in part rooted in his individuality. The relation of "in" is fundamental.[275a] Nevertheless these thoughts and choices partake of the character of the moral and logical universe in which they occur. The universe sets limits to what may be willed and thought. The most original thought and choice possess this character of being-limited, which is thus a universal. That is, all thought and choice also involve the characteristic of between-ness. It is out of our experience of between-ness that the problem of particular versus universal grows. Truth seems to be independent of our finite minds and of place and time. It is true from moment to moment and from person to person

and from thing to thing. How can we account for the fact that truth is true between moments, things and persons? In other words, how can we account for the universal character of all thought? The mind demands an explanation of the logical order whose principles are independent of us. We believe that McTaggart has failed to account for this order. His principle of unity is but a form of words. It does not account for the experienced fact of unity. His universe turns out to be an aggregate of individuals unrelated by a common logical order.

3) Supreme person versus impersonal Absolute as a solution of the logical problem.

Our conviction is that the only valid solution of the problem is to see in the universal features of all thought the principles of a Supreme Mind. Mind is by nature an individual that universalizes.[277] If we should consider the universe as an expression of a Supreme Mind we would have an explanation of our logical experience. For on that theory the particularity and universality of all finite thought would be explained as the principles of God's own experience.

It would not be necessary to consider finite selves as parts of that mind. As we have previously suggested, to do so would be to become involved in difficulties as serious as those that we are seeking to avoid.[276] A pluralistic universe is not a contradiction in terms. As long as the finite individuals are dependent upon the logical (physical and moral) order which is the experience of the Supreme Person, the unity is a real unity, yet compatible with the reality of the individuals.

Our conclusion is that by conceiving the universe exclusively in terms of logical structure, McTaggart has been led to deny the personality

of the Absolute, and that in doing so he has discarded the only conception able to reconcile the particular and universal features of our experience.[276] Personality is the only universalizing individual that we know.[277] It is therefore necessary to postulate the existence of a Supreme Person, the laws of whose mind constitute the logical order which finite selves experience but do not create. This order is not intelligible merely as the relations binding together any number of finite selves. For on this theory the "binding together" itself is a mystery.

This argument alone does not prove the existence of God. It points to the existence of a Supreme Mind as the ground of our logical experience. It asks and proves nothing concerning the moral character of that Mind. This leads us to the moral argument.

b. For this reason it fails to explain the moral order or to prove the universe good.

1) Conception of a Supreme Person offers true synthesis of "is" and "ought."

An Absolute that is but a "need of cognition" cannot explain the moral order which finite selves discover.[264] We have seen that McTaggart overlooks the fact that moral experience involves a demand for wholeness. A demand for logical wholeness has been the motive power of his dialectic, driving him on from contradictory conceptions to higher syntheses until he arrives at the stable conception of the Absolute, i.e., of the world as a whole conceived in terms of spirit. Thus McTaggart concludes that his Absolute Idea which is the demand for this complete knowledge is present in all sensory experience.[278] We may repeat our contention that the demand for wholeness is also the motive power in moral experience.[279] The categorical

imperative demands that we rise above the contradictions and imperfections of our moral life. If we attempt to rest in desire, feeling, instinct, or mere satisfaction as our end, this demand for completeness immediately sets to work upon this abstraction and drives us on to a higher value synthesis. The movement issues in the conception of a moral order, the realization of whose values is our eternal destiny. Even this conception is incomplete. Values exist only in and for persons.[280] Therefore this moral order can be ultimately real only in a Supreme Person, the home and ground of the values that finite selves experience. Our contention is that this dialectic process is as significant and valid as is the purely logical process of McTaggart's system. If the whole-idea is a "need of cognition" it is as truly a need of value experience. If in its former sense it demonstrates the existence of a logical order, in its latter use it proves the existence of the moral order. If in the former case it is the concept of Mind or Spirit and is the logical prius of a logical movement, in the latter case it is the concept of Personal, moral process and is the logical prius of an ethical movement. If in the former case it leads to a conception of a logical Absolute, or Mind, in the latter case it demands the existence of God, the Supreme Worth or Goodness.

Now we have shown above[281] that the former, the conception of an abstract, logical Absolute, cannot solve even the purely logical problem. This abstraction must recover its original concreteness in the idea of a complete personality, the only universalizing individual, in order to explain our common logical experience. The movement of the dialectic in moral experience has already issued in the conception of a Supreme Person, the ground of all values.[282] The final conclusion is evident. Again there is a movement from thesis to antithesis, from the abstract to the concrete,

from the Supreme Mind that universalizes, to the Supreme Goodness. The final synthesis is the conception of a full personal life, lacking the fragmentary and contradictory character of finite experience, the Supreme Person or God, the continual creator of the logical and moral orders which finite selves experience.

We submit this as an adequate synthesis of the "is" and the "ought," consequently as a correction of McTaggart's abstraction. We submit that our conception does justice to both structural and functional aspects of experience. The perfection of the Supreme Person lies not in the fact that he is "perfectly acquiescent and happy."[283] The goal of the universe is not a static harmony to acquiesce in which is the final end of human existence. God himself is eternally active. In the continual act of creation He calls into being finite selves, sustains his dynamic universe, and ever finds self-expression in the creation of new forms of value.

2) An adequate basis for religion.

This conception furnishes a metaphysical basis for religion. It results in a conviction that the universe is in harmony with the individual.[284] It does not merely assume, but offers metaphysical proof that this harmony is of a moral nature.[285] Nor is the harmony merely a present fact. It is a promise and a possibility - a challenge presented by a righteous universe to finite beings, by nature equipped for moral conquest, yet able to rebel and, within limits, to retard the whole upward movement. Whether such rebellion results in the self-extinction or the moral redemption of the wicked is a problem both too complex and uncertain for discussion here.

c. For this reason it fails to account for the physical order - the time-process with its change, evil, imperfection.

1) McTaggart's inability to explain our experience of time.

We saw above that the dialectic is not a process in time.[286] It is an analysis of timelessly existing relations. The motive power of the dialectic is the presence, throughout the entire process, of the goal.[287] The final conception is the logical prius of the movement.[288] The existence of any reality whatever implies the existence of all the categories. Thus they cannot come into being successively. To say so would be to hold that what is but partially real could exist. This is a contradiction in terms.[289]

The dialectic cannot be conceived as taking place in infinite time for it is plainly a process with a beginning and an end.[290] If we attempt to conceive it as taking place in finite time we encounter the difficulty noticed above. Nor could we answer the question as to what caused it or why it began and ended at one time rather than at another.[291]

> "If we ask whether time, as a fact, is finite or infinite, we find hopeless difficulties in the way of either answer. Yet, if we take time as an ultimate reality, there seems no other alternative. Our only resource is to conclude that time is not an ultimate reality." [292]

But if time is not real how can we explain such a persistent delusion as our experience of change, and of imperfection and evil? Hegel's answer, says McTaggart, was that all these are but delusions.

> "The infinite end is really accomplished eternally. It is only a delusion on our part which makes us suppose otherwise. And the only real progress is the removal of delusion. The universe is eternally the same, and eternally perfect. The movement is only in our minds. They trace one after another in succession the different categories of the Logic, which in reality have no time order, but continually coexist as elements of the Absolute Idea which transcends and unites them." [293]

But McTaggart will not take this easy and common way out of the difficulty. He accepts the conclusion of the dialectic that the universe

must be eternally rational, perfect and complete. But "it is certain that the universe is not completely rational for us."[294] If our experience of time, change and evil is a delusion, it is a delusion requiring a positive cause and explanation.[295]

> "However much we may treat time as mere appearance, it must, like all other appearance have reality behind it. The reality, it may be answered, is in this case the timeless Absolute. But this reality will have to account, not merely for the facts which appear to us in time, but for the appearance of succession which they do undoubtedly assume. How can this be done? What reason can be given why the eternal reality should manifest itself in a time process at all?"[296]

McTaggart can find no answer. He admits that "we are left with an awkward difference between what our philosophy tells us must be, and what our life tells us actually is."[297] He will not abandon the conclusion of the dialectic and hold that

> "the world is not a complete and perfect manifestation either of rationality or irrationality . . . . [for] it is hardly exaggerated to say that this is the only fact about the world which it would account for. The idea of such a principle is contradictory." [298]

Nor will he deny the apparent reality of the time process with its attendant imperfection and evil. Believing, as he does, in the validity of the dialectic, and in the reality of the time process, he can only

> "believe that one more synthesis remains, as yet unknown to us, which shall overcome the last and most persistent of the contradictions inherent in appearance." [299]

We admire the vigor and frankness with which McTaggart has respectively stated and faced this contradiction in his system. But we believe him to be in error when he asserts that any other idealistic system is equally unable to offer a solution.[300] He sees clearly that his difficulty is between a static logical conception and the experienced facts of process.[301] Yet it does not occur to him that such a difficulty would not confront a system which, from the start, had taken into account both the structural and functional features of experience.

2) The conception of a Supreme Person offers an explanation of both functional and structural aspects of experience.

We submit that the system outlined above, in taking account of both functional and structural aspects of experience, arrives at a conception able to explain both the timeless nature of truth and moral obligation, and the reality of time, change and evil. If ultimate reality be conceived in terms of personality, it must be progressive rather than static, for personal life is a process. On such a theory time may be accepted as ultimately real - as an essential form of all consciousness. Its validity for us may be explained by the fact that it is valid for the Supreme Person. The consciousness of God may possess a time form.[302] McTaggart's objection to this is that it does not explain the timeless nature of features of experience.

> "What then is eternal? Nothing but events, apparently. . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> Not . . . . the event of the Absolute's consciousness. For that must change every moment it regards as present something which it had previously regarded as future, and regards as past something which it had, in the previous moment, regarded as present." [303]

This objection seems to be based on a psychological theory which McTaggart definitely rejects. Self-consciousness is not a mere chain of events or series of bricks laid end to end.[304] It is a self-identical, time-transcending process. The self is not exhausted in the changing features of experience. If ultimate reality be grounded in a Supreme Person, both change and permanence may be recognized as ultimately real.

Our theory, then, is compatible with the fact of change. It is able to suggest a reason for the time process; it offers an explanation of the act of creation. McTaggart rejects the idea of a creative God on the ground that in an eternally perfect universe there is no need for a creator.[305]

This is another illustration of the embarrassment caused to a static universe by the facts of change. On our theory the perfection of the universe is progressive. Even though creation be an eternal act it is a movement in the direction of goodness - of more complete value achievement.

4. McTaggart's objections to the conception of a Supreme Person.

McTaggart would offer at least three additional objections to the theory that we have suggested.

a. He would probably say that to conceive time as essential to God's experience is to think of God as limited. Is he limited by something external to himself? Then he may not be able to guarantee the triumph of the good. He may even be more evil than good.

To think of time as essential to God's experience is to think of him as limited. But limited by what? If by something external to himself it may be that this limiting power is too great for him to overcome. We have no certainty that God, if he be good, will be able to effect the triumph of the good.[306] Neither can we be sure that he desires to do so. The existence of evil makes it as possible that God is vacillating and fickle as that he is good.[307]

b. If limited by his own nature alone, he cannot be good.

On the other hand, if God be limited only by his own nature, his limitations are rooted in his will, for the hypothesis is that there is nothing external to him to limit his action. He can do anything that he wills to do. Now evil exists. If God is limited only by his own will it must be that he wills the evil. And not as a means to the good. For who imposed upon God the necessity of attaining the good only by means of

temporary evil? If he is limited by nothing outside of himself there is no reason why he should not will a universe in which goodness would be possible without evil. A being who wills evil without being forced to do so is not righteous.[308]

c. God cannot be both good and omnipotent.

Even more impossible is it to attribute goodness to an omnipotent God. Such a being would be limited by nothing at all, not even by his own nature. Nothing would be impossible for him to do.[309] He "could exist even if he willed that nothing else should exist." He need not even will that any laws be true.[310] Therefore the fact that he willed the evil would prove that he was not God.

5. Reply to McTaggart's objections to God's existence.

a. McTaggart ignores the moral argument.

In urging these objections McTaggart has given no evidence that he has considered the moral argument which we have outlined. In arguing against a non-omnipotent, non-creative God he suggests ~~three~~ several possible lines of argument in favor of such a conception. He recognizes the ontological argument; the argument from the necessity of a first cause, the theory that all reality must be known to a supreme mind or knower, and the argument from design.[311] These he rejects. We have indicated our belief that his rejection of the third argument is fatal to his system. Since his plurality exists for no one mind it becomes not a unity but an aggregate.[312] Our main concern here is his apparent indifference to an argument from the objective reference of our value experience. We have seen that our judgment that an objective moral

order exists is as valid as our belief in the existence of the physical order, and further, that such a moral order can be real only in a Supreme Person.[313] Now what if the facts of evil contradict such a conclusion? Are we not justified in saying that we are confronting a final antinomy? If we are not able to resort to a dualism are we not justified in assuming, with McTaggart, that there must be a synthesis yet unknown to us? If we bear in mind McTaggart's final attitude toward the problem of evil, his stubborn insistence on the fact of evil as an insuperable difficulty in the way of a belief in God appears rather surprising. Our conviction is that his attitude is due to a neglect of the argument from the objective reference of our value experiences.

b. If omnipotence is incompatible with the essential limitations of a personality God is not omnipotent.

If omnipotence means the power to do anything at all, as McTaggart insists, the idea of a God both personal and omnipotent is contradictory. McTaggart admits that philosophy must regard some conception as ultimate, and that concerning such an ultimate fact we may not properly ask, Who made it, and why is it, thus and so?[314] If this be conceded, we have no right to say that God is limited because time is essential to him together with the other essential characteristics of personal life. Self-conscious existence involves certain definite attributes. It involves an experience of time. It is meaningless apart from the ability and necessity of choice between the good and the evil, the rational and the irrational. Personality, by definition, means the ability to act either reasonably or unreasonably. McTaggart says that an omnipotent God "could exist even if he willed that nothing else should exist and that no laws should be true. . . ."[310] But

if he willed that no laws should be true, this itself would be a law. Why does not McTaggart follow his logic to its conclusion and say that an omnipotent God could will himself out of existence? Doubtless he would reply that we are urging the fact that he himself would establish, - that the conception of an omnipotent God is contradictory. But our point is that in combating such an interpretation of omnipotence McTaggart is but trifling with words. He nowhere suggests that the essential conditions of personal existence place limitations upon God. To ask that God make the laws of irrationality rational, to make it possible to draw a circular triangle, or to create a universe in which goodness could be achieved without effort and the possibility of evil, is in McTaggart's words, a question that should never have been asked.[315] It is requesting that God make a universe in which irrationality is the rule. This is a contradictory conception. It is but another way of demanding that God obliterate his own personality. Philosophy accepts some conception as ultimate. Personalistic theism accepts as an ultimate fact a Supreme Personality. Like every other personal being God must choose between a reasonable and an unreasonable way of life. If there is evidence that he has chosen to be good and reasonable, we have no right to demand that he shall contradict both his moral character and his inherent nature in the creation of a universe in which goodness may be achieved without struggle and the possibility of evil.

c. This makes it possible that evil is a means toward the realization of the good.

As soon as this point is established McTaggart's main objection to a non-omnipotent, creative God loses its force. For a God, acting reasonably, our present universe might be the best possible, or indeed

the only universe, able to serve as a means to the realization of goodness. In this event the existence of evil would not reflect on God's character. It would be willed only as an inevitable consequence of the opportunity to achieve the good. McTaggart himself suggests that this is the only method by which we might reconcile the existence of evil with the goodness of God.

> "If we can so determine the fundamental nature of reality as to see what limitations it imposes on the accomplishment of God's volitions, we might find that, while it made it impossible that the universe should be entirely devoid of evil, it did not make it impossible that the good should always exceed the evil." [316]

The closing words of the quotation reveal the fact that McTaggart is thinking of God only as a directing mind, rather than as the immanent ground of our value experience. He is dealing with the argument from design, rather than the moral argument. Now in discovering that struggle, freedom of choice and thus the possibility that men will choose the evil, are necessary to the achievement of goodness, have we not some knowledge of the "fundamental nature of reality" and "the limitations [that] it imposes on the accomplishment of God's volitions?" And does not this knowledge serve as an hypothesis by which we may reconcile the existence of evil with the goodness of God? The empirical fact that the noblest character is usually a product of suffering and of misfortune; that the good will is not dependent upon external circumstance; and that no experience, not even the most trying, can deprive us of meeting that experience in the best possible manner, supports this hypothesis and robs evil of its apparently meaningless character. That this is a satisfactory explanation of the amount and intensity of human suffering cannot be claimed. But it seems to make evil more intelligible than does any other hypothesis. On this theory the existence of evil is a difficulty. But it is not a contradiction.

Thus we do not need to resort to McTaggart's expedient of asserting that contradictory propositions can be true. We have valid proof of God's existence in our experience of values. We also know that goodness can be won only as a result of struggle and that it is often achieved in highest degree as a result of suffering and misfortune nobly met. These facts do not make evil appear entirely intelligible. They do, we believe, justify us in our expectation that the future will confirm the hypothesis that we have adopted.

We have now completed our argument to show that McTaggart's Absolute is not fitted to serve as the ultimate conception of a system of philosophy. We have attempted to prove that, arising as a "need of cognition" alone, it cannot meet the need of value experience.[317] As used by McTaggart it is an abstract logical principle that cannot even explain the logical order of which finite selves are dependent members.[318] Even less able is it to account for the objectivity asserted by our judgments of value and to demonstrate the goodness of the universe.[319] As a purely structural conception it leaves the time process, with its change, evil and imperfection a mystery.[320]

We have attempted to prove that the idea of a Supreme Person, or God is adequate as an ultimate philosophic conception and as such is able to account for the facts of experience, many of which are left unexplained by McTaggart's theory.

RECAPITULATION.

We shall conclude our discussion of McTaggart's philosophy of religion with a recapitulation of the main points of our argument and a summary by chapters.

1. McTaggart defines religion as an "emotion resting on a conviction of a harmony between ourselves and the universe at large." As a descriptive definition this is adequate.[321]

2. McTaggart establishes his contention that religion so conceived can be justified only by metaphysical investigation.[322]

3. In general, McTaggart's motive and approach is logical and structural, rather than moral and functional. He believes his method to be organic. In reality it is abstract and logical.[323]

4. His method is more synoptic in his psychology and study of the self in its relation to the physical world.[324] He would hold that the subject matter of psychology is the self as a unique whole. Such a self is not a mere activity of its body. Instead, body, as a part of the physical world, must be conceived in terms of conscious experience. McTaggart's interest in logical analysis is constantly in danger of degrading this empirical self into a soul substance. This tendency is especially apparent in his ethics and theory of a series of existences without memory.

5. His ethical study of the self is inconsistent and vacillating. He fails to define the good. His essentially logical conception of the eternal perfection of the universe results in a static conception of the supreme good. His ethical determinism seems to be a corollary of this

proposition. The contradiction between such a static perfection and the time process with its change and evil is responsible for his divided allegiance between theoretical perfectionism and practical hedonism.[325]

6. This failure to face fundamental ethical facts is seen in the abstract character of his dialectic method. Ignoring the ethical a priori, his whole-idea becomes a part-idea and his dialectic process issues in a conception of Absolute Reality that is a structural abstraction.[326]

7. However, his dialectical method emphasizes the mind's demand for wholeness and its significance for philosophy. His error is a failure to see that this is a demand of moral experience as well as of cognition.[327]

8. Not seeing the necessity to prove that our moral experience refers to an objective moral order, McTaggart merely assumes, rather than demonstrates, that the universe, conceived in terms of spirit, is righteous in character.[328]

9. His conception of ultimate reality is a society of finite selves timelessly existing in a state of love. In denying personality to the unity his society becomes a mere aggregate, leaving unexplained the unity of our experience.[329]

10. His static conception of the present, eternal perfection of the universe directly contradicts the reality of the time process, change, imperfection and evil. Admitting that he has no solution for the problem, he errs in holding that the problem is also insoluble for any other idealistic system.[330]

11. Most of the difficulties of his system could be avoided by abandoning a logical Absolute for a Supreme Person, or God. For such a person time and change could be ultimately real. His rational and moral experience would constitute the logical and moral orders which we experience. His good purpose, involving the gift of freedom of choice to the selves whom he creates, would be compatible with evil regarded as a means to a righteous end, - the achievement of value by finite selves in cooperation with God.[331]

12. Such a conception would serve as an adequate basis of religion as defined above, demonstrating, rather than assuming, that the harmony of the universe is moral in character.[332]

SUMMARY BY CHAPTERS.

The following chapter by chapter summary is general, rather than detailed. References to the details of the argument will be found in the analytical table of contents on pages one to nine, inclusive.

CHAPTER ONE.

In the introduction[333] we examined McTaggart's definition of religion and of its relation to science, morality and philosophy. We concurred in his view of religion as "an emotion resting on a conviction of a harmony between ourselves and the universe at large" and in his conclusion that metaphysics alone is able to decide whether such a harmony exists. Neither science nor morality can do so. Consequently philosophy and religion, as well as science and morality, are of great practical importance. Against McTaggart we urged that both are the concern of the common man as well as of the philosopher.

CHAPTER TWO.[334]

In discussing McTaggart's answer to the question "Is There Harmony Between the Self and Its Environment," we considered first his view of the psychological nature of the self. We accepted as valid his definition of the self and his distinction between the concrete self and the abstract soul. However, not only in the development of his psychological theory, but in his ethics and metaphysics, McTaggart compromises with the soul-psychology which he professes to reject.

In treating the relation of the self to physical nature, McTaggart correctly insists that the self is a clue to the nature of the physical world. Far from being a mere activity of matter, the self finds that it must conceive physical nature in terms of spirit. This is a logical necessity. But for such a demonstration McTaggart does not look to science. The position of science is provisional in that it raises and becomes involved in fundamental difficulties which only philosophy can solve. What McTaggart consistently ignores is that science is also provisional in that it makes a preliminary abstraction from considerations of quality or value. However we found ourselves in agreement with his general conclusion that the self must interpret its physical environment in terms of its own nature. A certain harmony therefore exists.

CHAPTER THREE.[335]

But is this a harmony of moral character? We found that McTaggart never seriously grapples with this question. He makes the mistake of assuming that he has already established the fact of harmony, that a harmony of substance is a harmony of ethical nature. Consequently his discussion of "The Ethical Nature of the Self" is inadequate. He begins with the careless

assumption that the "provisional" view of science must be accepted as final and valid for philosophy. The result is an ethical determinism that evades the basic fact and organizing principle of moral experience, - the fact of personal obligation. Missing this major point McTaggart confuses ideals with desires and feelings, and advances pleasure-pain calculation as an ethical criterion, only to retract it on the very grounds for which he has preferred it to a perfectionistic theory. This wavering between theoretical perfectionism and practical hedonism we found to be rooted in the fundamental difficulty of his system, - the contradiction between the logically demonstrated eternal perfection of the universe and the experienced facts of change, imperfection and evil. We suggested that his ethical determinism is also dependent upon his conviction that in proving the physical universe to be of the same substance as the self, he has also shown it to be of a moral character. He believes that his logic has established the present and eternal perfection of the universe. Therefore all things must be determined by the good, and evil is in some sense unreal. Consequently McTaggart's ethical theory contributes nothing to the answer of his metaphysical question. He thinks that he has established the fact of harmony independently of any ethical investigation.

CHAPTER FOUR.[336]

In discussing McTaggart's conception of "The Metaphysical Nature of the Self" we sought to prove that the fatal error noted above was made possible by his use of a too-exclusively logical method. We argued that his dialectical process is abstract. While it professes to work upon the concrete wholeness of experience it really ignores both the form and content

of value experience. Consequently it regards the self as a logical principle, rather than as an ethical agent. It interprets the universe in terms of logical structure. It issues in a conception of an Absolute that is but a state of logical harmony.

CHAPTER FIVE.[337]

We then proceeded to consider the religious consequences of this narrowly logical method. We reiterated our charge that the motivating force of McTaggart's dialectic, his Whole-Idea, is but a Part-Idea, a "need of cognition" and not a demand for moral wholeness. Thus it is doomed to issue in a purely logical conception of the Absolute. This conception cannot even account for the logical order in which finite selves participate but do not create. Neither can it explain the functional aspects of experience, i.e., physical and moral processes, and the objective orders which these processes imply. We argued that the conception of a Supreme Person avoids these fatal difficulties and does justice to both structural and functional aspects of experience. In particular, such a conception accounts for the objectivity claimed by our moral judgments, finding that they point to a moral order ultimately real in the Supreme Mind. In this way the universe is found, rather than assumed, to be good, and the harmony required by religion is established.

FOOT NOTES.

When a source is frequently referred to it is designated by the abbreviation appearing after the title of the source in the bibliography. Thus DR refers to Some Dogmas of Religion, SHC, to Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology, and SHD to Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic. When the bibliography gives but one work of an author, the reference to that source is in the form of the author's name, followed by the page number. When reference is made to other sections of this thesis, the terms "see above," "see below" or "thesis" are used, followed by the page numbers. The abbreviation CD indicates that the writer is conscious of direct dependence upon class discussion or lecture notes.

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1. From the standpoint of presenting McTaggart's own religious philosophy. This is not true from the standpoint of their influence upon the writer's own thought. To other books appearing in this bibliography the writer is greatly indebted. He has attempted to follow no one slavishly. But he is conscious that the influence of certain thinkers and books has permeated his thought. In this connection he desires to mention W. R. Sorley's Moral Values and the Idea of God and E. S. Brightman's Introduction to Philosophy. Not only to Professor Brightman's book, but to the inspiration of his teaching, the writer is particularly indebted. While the writer alone is responsible for the conclusions herein set forth, at many points he is directly dependent upon class discussions or lecture notes. Whenever such dependence has been recognized, rather than unconscious, it has been designated by the abbreviation C.D.

2. DR., p. 3.

3. Brightman, pp. 317-322.

4. DR., pp. 5-6.

5. Ibid., p. 4.

6. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

7. Ibid., p. 10.

8. McTaggart himself does not make this precise distinction nor use these terms. See Brightman, pp. 317-322.

9. DR., p. 8.

10. Ibid., p. 7.

11. Ibid., pp. 7-10.

12. Ibid., p. 1.

13. Ibid., pp. 1, 3, 32.

14. Ibid., p. 28.

15. Ibid., p. 29.

16. Ibid., p. 3.

17. Ibid., p. 13.

18. Ibid., pp. 13-14.

19. Ibid., p. 34

20. Ibid., p. 35.

21. Ibid., p. 33.

22. Ibid., p. 33.

23. Ibid., 13-16.

24. Ibid., 14-22.

25. Ibid., pp. 22-24.

26. Ibid., p. 23, 24.

27. Ibid., p. 22.

28. Ibid., pp. 24-28.

29. Ibid., p. 25.

30. Ibid., p. 26.

31. Ibid., p. 28.

32. Ibid., p. 261.

33. Ibid., p. 293.

34. Ibid., p. 36.

35. Ibid., pp. 292-293.

36. Thesis, Chapter V., pp. 84-86 especially.

37. SHD., p. 187.

38. DR., p. 32.

39. SHD., p. 254.

40. DR., p. 295.

41. Ibid., p. 298.

42. Thesis, Chapter II, pp. 15-21.

43. Ibid., pp. 21-27.

44. Thesis, Chapter III, pp. 28-53.

45. Thesis, Chapter IV., pp. 54-74.

46. Thesis, Chapter V., pp. 75-93.

47. SHC., p. 4.

48. SHC., p. 57; SHD., p. 21.

49. SHC., p. 57.

50. DR., p. 108-109.

51. SHC., pp. 33-34.

52. SHC., p. 34.

53. DR., 234; Review of Royce, p. 561; SHC., p. 85.

54. SHC., p. 254; SHD., p. 212.

55. SHC., p. 37.

56. Ibid., p. 41.

57. Ibid., pp. 41-42.

58. The following criticism probably applies only to an earlier stage in McTaggart's thought. In a note to the second edition of SHC., p. 55, he explains that he no longer holds "the views as to the relation of the self and the objects of which it is conscious, which are explained in Sections 24-30." These sections include the three passages criticized here. However on pp. 284-285 the same views are stated with no qualifying note. Doubtless McTaggart intends the one note to refer to all statements of the view in the book. He has not altered the texts as he thinks these views true expositions of Hegel's philosophy. Since we have no later statement indicating the extent and implications of McTaggart's change of view, we can but criticize his theory as it stands. To us it seems an integral part of his system.

59. SHC., p. 23.

60. Ibid., p. 42.

61. Ibid., pp. 25-26.

62. Ibid., pp. 264-265.

63. See below, pp. 50-51; 60-66.

64. See below, pp. 30-39.

65. See below, p. 39.

66. SHC., Chapter IX, esp. p. 284.

67. DR., pp. 173-174, 179.

68. SHD., p. 214, see note 63.

69. See below, pp. 66- 74. DR., Chapter III, SHC, Chapter II.

70. DR., p. 134.

71. Ibid., p. 128.

72. Ibid., p. 130.

73. Thesis, pp. 72-74.

74. Tsanoff, p. 140.

75. DR., p. 80.

76. DR., pp. 78-80.

77. Ibid., pp. 81-87.

78. Ibid., pp. 82-83.

79. Ibid., pp. 83-100.

80. Ibid., pp. 87-88.

81. Ibid., p. 91.

82. This is not McTaggart's terminology but it summarizes his conclusions. DR., pp. 94-95.

83. Ibid., pp. 98-99.

84. Ibid., p. 99; SHD., p. 24.

85. DR., p. 92.

86. Ibid., p. 91.

87. SHD., p. 84.

88. Ibid., p. 83.

89. Ibid., p. 186.

90. Ibid., p. 16.

91. Ibid., p. 36.

92. Ibid., p. 187.

93. See below, pp. 30-31; 57-59; 76-78; 82-84.

94. DR., pp. 97-99.

95. Ibid., 99-103.

96. See below, pp. 60-66.

97. See below, pp. 79-88.

98. This is our own statement, not McTaggart's. It is doubtful whether he would accept it. Our criticism of him is that his ethics are an appendix to his metaphysics. They do not furnish data for his philosophy to interpret. Rather they are deduced from his metaphysical conclusion. Thesis, pp. 76-78.

99. SHC., pp. 95, 279.

100. SHC., Chapter IV; DR., Chapter V.

101. SHC., pp. 279, 96.

102. Ibid., pp. 162, 270; SHD., p. 30.

103. DR., p. 275.

104. Ibid., p. 277.

105. SHC., p. 267.

106. SHD., pp. 213-214; SHC., p. 280.

107. SHC., p. 266.

108. Ibid., p. 261.

109. Ibid., p. 259.

110. DR., 140.

111. Ibid., 141.

112. Ibid., p. 143.

113. See above, pp. 23-25

114. DR., pp. 144, 177; SHD., p. 24.

114a. Taylor, A. E., Phil. Rev., p. 420.

115. DR., p. 146.

116. Ibid., pp. 147-149.

117. Ibid., p. 153.

118. Ibid., p. 157.

119. Ibid., p. 151.

120. Ibid., p. 158.

121. Ibid., p. 160.

122. Ibid., p. 161.

123. Ibid., p. 164.

124. He ignores them in this context. But see SHC., pp. 240-241.

125. DR., pp. 165-167.

126. Ibid., p. 168-169.

127. Ibid., p. 168.

128. SHC., p. 142.

129. Ibid., p. 145.

130. Ibid., p. 148.

131. SHC., p. 240. But see pp. 100-101 where McTaggart says that there is some meaning in saying that I should endeavor to make others do that which they themselves think morally right, but that such a standard is useless in my own case. As usual he qualifies the statement, but adds: "Such a criterion can never give a reason why the morally good should be desired."

It is the one criterion which can give such a reason. Unless I desire and am true to the good, I repudiate my character as a moral being and my moral life is involved in contradiction.

132. SHC., p. 241.

133. DR., p. 170.

134. Ibid., p. 172.

135. Ibid., p. 171.

136. Ibid., pp. 174-175.

137. Ibid., pp. 178-179; SHC., p. 140.

138. See above, pp. 20-21.

139. SHC., p. 95.

140. Ibid., p. 96.

141. Moore, pp. 344-346.

142. Thesis, Chapter V, pp. 76-84.

143. SHC., p. 252.

144. Ibid., p. 100.

145. Ibid., p. 101.

146. SHD., p. 232.

147. SHC., pp. 98-99.

148. Moore, pp. 342-344.

149. SHD., Chapter V, esp. pp. 178-180. Thesis, Chapter V, pp. 84-86.

150. SHC., p. 119.

151. SHC., p. 99.

152. SHC., p. 126.
See also p. 174. "whatever does happen to a moral being, whether it be Sin or Virtue, is, when it happens, a moral advance. This is a classic illustration of the way in which McTaggart forces the facts of moral experience to fit his logically demonstrated eternal perfection of the universe. Thesis, pp. 64, 84-86.

153. SHC., p. 127.

154. I believe this criticism to be just in reference to a prominent tendency in McTaggart's thought. Of course there is another tendency. The more empirical tendency is seen in his argument, or implied con-

viction, that in the experience of pleasure we have our best insight into the nature of the Absolute Good. Thus he seems to select his hedonic criterion for empirical reasons and not merely because of a devil-may-care attitude toward ethical problems. The latter attitude is very apparent in the passages just quoted. See note 152. Cp. thesis, pp. 46-49.

155. SHC., p. 253.

156. Ibid., p. 254.

157. Ibid., p. 96.

158. Ibid., p. 122.

159. Ibid., pp. 96, 119.

160. McTaggart uses the terms "happiness"and "pleasure" interchangeably. We believe this to be an error. The former involves a reference to principle and system which is not essential to the latter. SHC., Chapter IV.

161. SHC., p. 110.

162. Ibid., p. 119.

163. Thesis, pp. 28-30.

164. Moore, p. 346.

165. SHC., p. 261.

166. Ibid., p. 110.

167. Ibid., p. 96.

168. Ibid., pp. 258-259.

169. Ibid., pp. 285; SHD., 228-229.

170. SHD., pp. 224-226; SHC., Chapter IX.
How much of this criticism applies to McTaggart's final thought is a question. In a note to the second edition he states that he no longer accepts the arguments to prove that knowledge and volition cannot be absolutely real, but that he believes "that every state of consciousness in absolute reality is a state alike of knowledge, of volition and of love." P. 293., SHC. It is unfortunate that we have no elaboration of this change of view. Inasmuch as his treatment of the good is so vague it is doubtful whether this change of view would have much effect upon his ethics, or even upon his conception of the state in absolute reality.

171. SHC., p. 260.

172. Ibid., p. 289.

173. Ibid., p. 119.

174. Ibid., p. 124.

175. Ibid., p. 126.

176. Ibid., p. 127.

177. Ibid., p. 122.

178. Ibid., p. 123.

179. Ibid., p. 128.

180. Moore, pp. 360-362.

181. SHC., p. 122.

182. Ibid., pp. 99-107.

183. Ibid., pp. 103-104.

184. Ibid., p. 2.

185. SHD., p. 1.

186. Ibid., pp. 92-93.

187. Ibid., p. 92.

188. SHC., p. 1.

189. Thesis, pp. 22-23, 60-62.

190. SHC., p. 60.

191. Ibid., p. 1.

192. SHD., p. 113.

193. Ibid., p. 39.

194. Ibid., p. 92.

195. Ibid., pp. 91-92; cf. 57, 22, 102.

196. SHD., p. 28.

197. Ibid., p. 201.

198. See below, pp. 33-39.

199. See below, pp. 76-84.

200. SHD., p. 253.

201. See above, pp. 39-41; see below, pp. 76-84.

202. SHD., pp. 17-18.

203. Ibid., p. 27. Cf., 24, 29, 39, 41.

204. SHC., pp. 9-16.

205. Ibid., p. 9.

206. Ibid., p. 17.

207. Ibid., p. 285.

208. Ibid., p. 291. See note 170.

209. Thesis, p. 1.

210. Thesis pp. 87-88.

211. Sorley, p. 352.

212. DR., p. 289.

213. See above, p. 50, 51.

214. Thesis, pp. 79-82.

215. See below, pp. 50-51.

216. SHC., p. 285.

217. Ibid., p. 258.
This quotation is not taken from a section covered by the note to the second edition, p. 293. See note 170 of this thesis.

219. See above, p. 41.

220. See below, pp. 84-86.

221. SHC., p. 175. See above, pp. 30-40.

222. SHD., p. 209. SHC., pp. 282, 292.

223. SHC., p. 86

224. SHD., p. 210.

225. Calkins, Review of SHC., p. 89.

226. PPP., p. 381.

227. C.D.

228. See below, pp. 79-82.

229. SHC., Chapter II; DR. Chapters III, IV.

230. SHC., p. 32.

231. See below, pp. 84-86.

232. SHC., p. 29.

233. Ibid., p. 47.

234. Ibid., p. 47.

235. Ibid., pp. 50-51.

236. DR., pp. 120-121.

237. SHC., p. 34; SHD., Chapter V.

238. See below, pp. 76-78.

239. DR., p. 278.

240. C.D.

241. See below, 82-88.

242. See above, pp. 21-26.

243. DR., p. 101.

244. Ibid., p. 104.

245. Ibid., p. 105

246. DR., 134.

247. SHC., 49-55, DR., pp. 127-133, 137.

248. SHC., p. 49.

248a. Thesis, p. 68.

249. SHC., p. 50-52; DR., 132-133.

250. DR., p. 133-136; SHC., pp. 52-54.

251. SHC., p. 51.

252. DR., p. 132.

253. Tsanoff, p. 253.

254. Tsanoff, pp. 135-137.

255. Thesis, pp. 34;39-41; 64-66; 68-70.

256. DR., 186-188.

257. Cp. PPP., pp. 377-382, and Allen, Louise W.

258. SHC., pp. 56-69, 213.

259. DR., p. 186.

260. Ibid., p. 186-188; SHC., pp. 56-57.

261. See below, p. 84.

262. SHD., pp. 81-82.

263. Ibid., p. 81.

264. Ibid., p. 82.

265. See above, p. 75.

266. See above, pp. 54-55.

267. SHD., p. 201.

268. See above, pp. 57-59.

269. See above, p. 60.

270. SHC., p. 47.

27Ca. Ibid., p. 61.

271. Ibid., p. 63.

272. Ibid., p. 61.

273. SHD., p. 210.

274. PPP., p. 381.

275. N.E., p. 82.

275a. C.D.

276. See above, pp. 64-66.

277. Brightman, p. 138.

278. See above, pp. 56-57.

279. Thesis, pp. 57-58; 69-70; 76-78. Cp. pp. 39-41.

280. Brightman, p. 163.

281. Thesis pp. 79-82.

282. Brightman, Chapter V, esp. p. 164; Sorley, Chapter XIII, esp. pp. 346-349.

283. DR., p. 254.

284. See above, p. 1.

285. See above, pp. 39-41.

286. Thesis, pp. 66-67.

287. See above, pp. 56-57.

288. SHD., pp. 201, 171.

289. SHD., p. 165.

290. Ibid., pp. 158-159.

291. Ibid., pp. 162-163.

292. Ibid., p. 164.

293. Ibid., p. 171.

294. Ibid., p. 170.

295. Ibid., pp. 174-178.

296. Ibid., p. 177.

297. Ibid., p. 179.

298. Ibid., p. 186.

299. Ibid., p. 195.

300. Ibid., p. 164.

301. Ibid., p. 192. "Now the Absolute Idea only becomes known to us through a process and consequently as something incomplete and imperfect." (Italics ours).

p. 193. "the eternal realisation of the Absolute Idea, and the existence of change and evil, are, for us as we are, absolutely incompatible, nor can we even imagine a way in which they would cease to be so."

302. McConnell, F. J.

303. Review of Royce, p. 559.

304. See above, p. 15. SHC., p. 38.

305. DR., 234, note i. SHC., Chapter II.

306. DR., pp. 259-260, 266.

307. Ibid., p. 257.

308. Ibid., pp. 224-233, 217.

309. Ibid., p. 217.

310. Ibid., p. 207.

311. Ibid., p. 237.
He also gives passing mention to several other less important arguments.

312. Thesis, pp. 64-65; 79-82.

313. See above, pp. 69-70; 82-84.

314. DR., p. 248. SHD., p. 52.

315. DR., pp. 207, 217.

316. Ibid., p. 268.

317. Thesis, pp. 76-78.

318. Thesis, pp. 78-82.

319. Thesis, pp. 82-84.

320. Thesis, pp. 84-87.

321. Thesis, p. 1-2.

322. Thesis, pp. 3-10.

323. Thesis, pp. 25-26; 30-31; 40-41; 49-50; 57-61; 62-64; 67-70. Chapters IV and V.

324. Thesis, Chapter II, pp. 15-27.

325. Thesis, Chapter III, pp. 28-53.

326. Thesis, pp. 57-58; 76-78; 82-84.

327. Thesis, pp. 56-58; 61-62; 76-78.

328. Thesis, pp. 40-41;82-84.

329. Thesis, pp. 60-61; 64-66; 79-82.

330. Thesis, pp. 43-44; 64; 84-87.

331. Thesis, Chapter V, pp. 75-93.

332. Thesis, pp. 1, 40-41; 82-84.

333. Thesis, pp. 1-14.

334. Thesis, pp. 15-27.

335. Thesis, pp. 28-53.

336. Thesis, pp. 54-74.

337. Thesis, pp. 75-93

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